00085270

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

ITALY REVISITED.

85270 a.

BY

A. GALLENGA,

AUTHOR OF

'ITALY, PAST AND PRESENT,' 'ITALY IN 1848,' 'FRA DOLCINO,' 'HISTORY OF PIEDMONT,' 'COUNTRY LIFE IN PIEDMONT,' 'THE INVASION OF DENMARK,' ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

SECOND EDITION.

London:
SAMUEL TINSLEY,
10 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND.
1876.

[*All rights reserved.*]

-J13.-1
Gal/Ita
85270.

TO

MARGUERITE OF SAVOY,

PRINCESS OF PIEDMONT,

"The Star of Italy,"

THESE VOLUMES

ARE RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE independence of Italy was built on the world's sympathy—on the estimate civilized nations formed of her fitness for self-government.

Forty years ago it was important to show that if the Italians were bent on being their own masters, credit might be given them for sense to wish for what best suited them, as well as for determination to obtain what they wished. Such was at that time my theme.

Now it is done. The Italians have not conquered the Austrians or the French, but they have turned them out; they have not turned out the Pope, but they have conquered him—in both cases obtaining what was most expedient; for they have rid themselves of the foreigner without incurring his enmity, and they have deprived the Pope of power without throwing him on the foreigner's mercies.

It is important to inquire how much of this success was owing to fortune, and how much to virtue, and such is now my theme; for what fortune has given fortune can take away; the achievement of virtue alone abides.

THE AUTHOR.

LLANDOGO, MONMOUTHSHIRE,
1874-5.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

TRAVELLING IN ITALY.

taly by Express Train—High-ways and By-ways—Light and Shade—Italian Railway Travelling—King Dirt at Home—Italian Fellow-Travellers—Midnight Railway Talk—A Political Prelude—Night and Morning . . . . . Page 1

CHAPTER II.

THE ITALIAN CAPITAL.

1859 and 1874—Rome and her New Masters—Italian Life, North and South—Italy's Mission in Rome—The Rate of Progress in Rome—Obstacles in its Way—Two Cities in One City . . . . . Page 16

CHAPTER III.

ROME AND THE ROMANS.

The Pincio—A Bird's-eye View of Rome—Distant View—The Vatican—The Capitol—The Quirinal—Near View—St. Angelo—The Pantheon, &c.—The Roman People—A Roman Holiday . . . . . Page 29

CHAPTER IV.

OLD AND NEW ROME.

Papal and Italian Rome—Roman Thoroughfares—Cruelty to Animals—Roman Improvements—The Via Nazionale—The Corso—New Quarters—Prati di Castello—Ancient and Modern Rome—Preservation of Ruins—Roman Museums—Archæological Liberality—Peculiarities of National Character. Page 47

CHAPTER V.

THE ROMAN SEASON.

Italy and her Foreign Visitors—The Strangers' Rome—The Foreign Season in Rome—Roman Climate—The Health of Rome—Cholera—Cholera Panic—Fumigations—Roman Mortality—The Campagna—Society in Rome—The Roman Princes. Page 69

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROMAN CARNIVAL.

Carnival Associations—Pasquino I. and II.—A Carnival Pageantry—Decline of Carnival—Carnival by Order—Trade and Carnival—Carnival and Pauperism—Carnival a Failure—All Play and No Work—Old and New Carnival—Fun in Bad Taste—Carnival Parties—A Children's Ball . . . Page 87

CHAPTER VII.

THE POPE AND THE KING.

The Quirinal and the Vatican—The Tycoon and the Mikado—Church and State—Civil Marriage—Lay and Clerical Education—Loaves and Fishes—The Pope—The King—Italian Statesmanship . . . . . Page 105

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CARDINALS.

The Next Conclave—The Sacred College—Foreign Cardinals—Italian Cardinals—The Chances of Succession—Parties in the Sacred College—Desirable Candidates—The Conclave and the Italian Government . . . . . Page 120

CHAPTER IX.

THE ULTRAMONTANES.

Cisalpines and Transalpines—Religious Apathy in Italy—The Italian Clergy: Town Priests; Country Priests—The People's Religion—Lay and Clerical Profanity—Latins and Teutons—The Pope's Faith—Cismontanes and Ultramontanes—Italian Views—Foreign Views—Pilgrims and Crusaders . Page 135

CHAPTER X.

FRANCE AND ITALY.

France and Ultramontanism—French Policy towards Italy—French Religious Revival—Religion and Conservatism—French Priests: the Archbishop of Paris—French Priests in Rome—De La Haye's Burial—Ultramontanism and Chauvinism . Page 160

CHAPTER XI.

ITALY AND GERMANY.

The King's Journey—Bismarck and La Marmora—Position of Affairs in 1866—Napoleon's Policy—Embarrassment of Italy before the War—During and after the War—Italian and German Views of the Papal Question—The only Policy for Italy . . . . . Page 178

CHAPTER XII.

THE ITALIAN ARMY.

The Shah and the Italian Army—The Starvation System—Italian Military Annals—Necessity for the Rehabilitation of Italian Soldiers—French and Italian Soldiers—La Marmora—Ricotti—The Prussian System as Applied to Italy—Conditions of Italian Army—Dolorous Contrasts—Bersaglieri—Carabinieri—The Size of the Italian Army—Alliances or Neutrality.

Page 195

CHAPTER XIII.

ITALIAN FORTIFICATIONS.

The Defences of Italy—Italian Military Geography—Lines of Defence—The Alps—North Italian Fortresses—Peninsular Italy—The Coasts—Naval Forces—Admiral Saint-Bon's Plan—Men and Soldiers in Italy . . . . . Page 223

CHAPTER XIV.

ITALIAN FINANCE.

War and Finance—Italian Financiers: Sella; Minghetti—Financial Measures—Taxes—Expenses—Italian Morality—Municipalism—North and South—Retrenchment and Reform—The Octroi—Paper Currency—Public Faith—Mr. Boutwell and the Italians.

Page 240

CHAPTER XV.

ITALIAN WEALTH.

Italian Trade—Italian Wine—Former and Present Cultivation—Piedmont—Asti—Italian Œnologists—Barolo—Chianti—Orvieto and Montefiascone—Valtellina—Marsala—Old and New Prices—Statistics—Italian Wine Trade—Oil and Silk—Italian Cattle—Labouring Cattle—Cattle Breeding—Agricultural Economy . . . . . Page 266

CHAPTER XVI.

ITALIAN PAUPERISM.

Italian Emigrants—Work and Work's Wages—Italian Want of Enterprise—Necessity the best Schoolmistress—The Blessings of Hunger—Italian Beggars—Causes of Mendicity—Alms-givers—Poverty and Emigration—Past and Present Italian Emigration—Statistics—Italians in South America—Italian Republicanism—Organ Boys . . . . Page 287

CHAPTER XVII.

CHURCH AND STATE IN ITALY.

Monks and Beggars—Monastic Orders—Mendicant Orders—Monastic Vows—Collision between the Law and the Clerical Authorities—The Marriage Laws—Education—Anarchy of Religious Opinions—The Diocese of Mantua—Apathy of the Government and of the Intellectual Classes on Religious Subjects. Page 305

CHAPTER XVIII.

PUBLIC SECURITY IN ITALY.

The Knife in Italy—Duelling, High and Low—The Plebani Verdict—Italian Juries—Italian Magistrates: the Bassano Case—Italian Criminal Proceedings—Italian Prisons—Brigandage—Condition of Sicily—Symptoms of Progress . . Page 331

CHAPTER XIX.

ITALIAN LEGISLATION.

The King Opening Parliament—The Constitution of the Chamber—Loss of Time—Its Causes—Its Remedies—The Electoral Law—Municipal Institutions—Character of the Italian Parliament—Its Discretion—The Oath in Parliament—The Oath in Courts. Page 359

CHAPTER XX.

ITALIAN ROYALTY.

Victor Emmanuel—His Court—His Domestic Arrangements—His Character—The King at Home and Abroad—The King in Germany—The Italian King and the German Emperor—The King in England—The Civil List—The King's Liberality—His Extravagance—Stars and Crosses—The Fountain of Honour . . . . . Page 383

ITALY REVISITED.

CHAPTER I.

TRAVELLING IN ITALY.

Italy by Express Train—High-ways and By-ways—Light and Shade—Italian Railway Travelling—King Dirt at Home—Italian Fellow-Travellers—Midnight Railway Talk—A Political Prelude—Night and Morning.

If ten years of absence are apt to give a man a longing for a "home, however homely," what must be the feelings of an Italian revisiting Italy after an equally long interval? Petrarch, on his return from a tour in many countries, declared that "north of the Alps he had seen no traces of civilization." One of his countrymen of the present day might feel tempted to say, with greater justice, that in crossing those mountains he had lost sight of beauty. The old Greeks called the Good and the Beautiful by the same name. I do not know how far the English proverb, "Handsome is that handsome does," will fit in this case; but that Italy is the land to which the adjective "fair" is most appropriately applied,

and that her name, call it in whatever language you will, sounds sweetest in the ear, are matters about which the countrymen of Laura's songster are agreed, and from which their neighbours are seldom inclined to dissent.

What months are April and May in this blissful region! Again and again I have had to cross the country from end to end at this period, and I have always been struck with the same phenomenon—crowds of foreign visitors running from Italy just as the country attains its utmost loveliness. Everywhere I have been half-stifled by the throng in the northward trains, and have had my choice of the four corners in the carriages rolling southward. Yet it is certainly not at the close but at the opening of the summer season that the land and the people are looking their best. It is between April and July that Italy is least liable to the charge of parched or blighted nakedness which travellers bring against it.

The late Lord Lytton has said that "although female beauty may be fairer in the north, there is nowhere such richness of complexion as mantles the brown cheeks of Italian women." And in the same manner it may be safely asserted that there are nowhere such spring colours as Italy can boast, nowhere such a deep, vivid green—while it lasts. Providence has not bestowed all gifts on this land, else who would consent to live away from it?—but it has given Italy more than an average share,

and has so wisely and so bountifully spread its charms over the whole blessed region, that every district you come to almost invariably strikes you as the most favoured.

Let the traveller come down from the Great Tunnel of the Col de Fréjus, through the deep gorges and the bold cliffs of the Upper Valley of the Dora; he advances through the widening "Gate of Italy" which Nature has opened below Susa—he crosses the Sub-alpine level between the mountain-wall of the Alps and the smiling Montferrat hills that woo Turin—he proceeds along the skirts of the Apennines, past Tortona, Montebello, Stradella, to the fertile region of Emilia, the garden-fields of Parma, Modena, Bologna—he strikes off from Bologna across the hundred tunnels which bring him into the Val d'Arno—he surveys the Tuscan paradise as it unfolds itself before him at each winding of the line above Pistoia—he glides along the vale of the Ombrone to Florence—he winds all round that "fairest of fair cities," and ascends the Upper Val d'Arno to the heights which separate it from the plain of Arezzo. Hence down the valley of the Tiber to Perugia, he goes past the high-perched cities of Umbria—Assisi, Spello, Spoleto, and bursts through the gorges of Narni and Terni into the desolation of the Roman Campagna, till he catches a first glimpse of the dome of St. Peter's.

It is only a twenty hours' railway run, yet where else have you seen, where else can you hope to see

such a succession of dissolving views, so happy a blending of steep and level, of smooth and rugged, of the sublime and the lovely?

Yet take any other route you like—for "all roads lead to Rome." Travel along shore by the line of Romagna and the Marches, Rimini and Ancona, and come by the Falconara junction to Fuligno; or leave Florence for Siena and the hoary waste of the Etruscan cities to Orvieto; or, entering Italy from other Passes, linger along the bays and headlands of the Genoese Riviera; or tarry among the northern lakes above Milan; or dwell on the Brenta and the Euganean Hills above Venice,—and each scene will drive the image of former scenes from your memory, and you will wonder at every step whether it is only now that you are indeed in Italy, whether you have only now reached its reality, and what had gone before had been merely a dream.

It is by no means sure that Italy does not gain rather than lose by being thus seen from an express train. There are spots on the way that would not bear close inspection; spots in which careless husbandry, squalid habitations, vagrancy and beggary, sicken you with the Eden upon which so much of heaven has been lavished, and when you wonder what Italy would be—were it not for the Italians! Yonder few straggling trees tell you of vast noble forests which human improvidence has ravaged; those scarred mountain-sides, those lawless torrents

flooding the fields and blocking up the bridges on the plain, bear evidence of the sluggishness and faintness of heart with which in these regions the inevitable battle with Nature has been fought. Much has been lost upon those to whom much had been given; yet hardly anywhere else have man and his works done more to awaken human interest —hardly anywhere else will town and country more equally claim attention.

I have not, in the above rapid scamper through Italy, for one moment deviated from the ordinary beaten track. Of spots that the locomotive does not reach, of localities at which the express train does not stop, handbooks vainly attempt the description. The traveller has barely leisure for Rome and Naples, for Florence and Venice. Even at these places little more than the familiar haunts are frequented: the Piazza di San Marco, the Pitti and the Uffizi Galleries, the Chiaia, St. Peter's, and the Colosseum. Life is short and art in Italy has had a long career. "Have you seen the Pandolfini House at Porta San Gallo in Florence?"—"Did you stop at Santa Maria Formosa in Venice, and see the Santa Barbara by Palma Vecchio?"—"Have you given a few minutes to the Sibyl of Baldassare Peruzzi in the church of Fonte Giusta at Siena?" You have not. I thought so. Then you will find wiseacres to tell you you may as well go back to Italy at once, for you have seen nothing—not if you have walked through a hundred other palaces

— not if you have reviewed "acres of canvas" of the great Venetian and Tuscan masters; for nowhere will you see the mediæval and the classical in architecture so happily blended as at that house, near Porta San Gallo, and you will not find it easy to name two figures of so much character as that Barbara and that Sibyl, or so different from the common run of Madonnas, Venuses, Eves, and Dianas.

It is the same with spots of great historic interest. Who ever looked out at the window between Rho and Sesto Calende, to catch a sight of the battle-field of Legnano — "that field where Germany was, for once, routed by Italy; where Barbarossa turned his back upon the Lombard Leaguers, and wandered three nights, unhorsed and foot-sore, in the woods, a fugitive; and his young wife on the look-out for him from the watch-tower at Pavia, lost heart in her weary waiting, and fainted in the arms of her speechless attendants"?*

Or who ever stopped at the little station of Sant' Ilario, between Reggio and Parma, and ran up to the Quattro Castelli, to visit what remains of Canossa? — that famous castle-yard of which Bis-

* "Direm lo sbaraglio del campo battuto,
E il sir di tant' oste tre giorni perduto,
Tre notti tra i dumi tentando un sentier.
La bella Consorte tre notti l' aspetta,
Tre giorni lo chiama dall' alta vedetta;
Nel quarto misviene tra i muti scudier."

BERCHET, *Le Fantasie.*

marck is so often making his stalking-horse in the Berlin Parliament — that scene of the greatest triumph of Church over State—that "paved inner courtyard where Henry of Germany did penance for three days in the snow, bare-footed, bare-headed, fasting and in sackcloth and ashes, and Pope Hildebrand came down from the inner apartments where he was sitting in state with the Countess Matilda, and laid his slippered foot on the anointed head, 'treading,' as he said, 'on the asp and basilisk.'"

How many of us care to go back with our historic memories beyond Solferino?

It is partly at his peril, it must be confessed, and at any rate greatly to his discomfort, that a stranger can venture to stray from the straight line in this country. Travelling even along the ordinary route, his temper is often put to the severest test. He has to put up with crowded carriages, crowded for night and day journeys, whichever class he goes by, often indescribably dirty, and either denied the luxury of light, or furnished with lamps warranted to go out at the darkest hour and in the longest tunnel. He has to squeeze in with seven other travellers in a first-class carriage, with nine in the second-class, as well as with all their bags, portmanteaus, lap-dogs and canary-birdcages, because the Italian companies charge for every pound and ounce of registered luggage, and a traveller of a thrifty mind takes *omnia bona sua* in his compart-

ment, to be laid on his neighbour's knees if there is not room enough on his own.

And then the tobacco-smoke! Perverse people who will light their cigars in non-smoking carriages, counting heads and proclaiming that "the Ayes have it," Italy being now a free country, and to be swayed by the will of the majority—the tobacco-smoke invading the platform, the ticket-office, the waiting-room and *buffet*, till the very bills with "*È assolutamente vietato di fumare*" (No smoking allowed) are black with it—and from which no escape is possible, as the stations are conducted on strict French principles, and the passengers are marshalled about, penned up, huddled together before the glass-doors—as if they had paid "flash" coin and were in durance for it—till the bell gives the signal for a rush to the carriages and a scramble for places; the passengers are locked in, and the guard and the station-master and all the porters bawl out "*Partenza!*" and the louder they cry "We are off!" the longer it takes them to be off.

The traveller, however, if he be an old stager, has had experience of such things in other countries. What he finds peculiar to Italy is that the liberty of which he is deprived seems to be allowed to any one else who will take it. He comes to stations where the porter is absent with or without leave, and where that functionary's place is usurped by ragamuffins, undistinguishable by badge, blouse, or uniform, irresponsible, importunate, extortionate;

where the waiting-rooms, even the first-class waiting-rooms, are infested by beggars, barely disguised as vendors of newspapers, lucifer-matches, court-plaster, or cotton nightcaps, but sometimes even without disguise of any kind, *bonâ fide* mendicants, as I saw at Altopascio, between Pescia and Lucca, swarming at the carriage-doors with their stock-in-trade of sore legs and palsied limbs, or uncouth, garlic-breathing rustics, as beset me at San Germano, near Monte Cassino, a Sovereign Mob in possession, taking their ease in the best room, reclining on the floor, laying their heads on the softest sofa, and leaning against the knees of the daintiest ladies.

All these drawbacks of railway travelling will be more than compensated to a benevolently disposed stranger by Italian politeness; for it certainly must be his own fault if this ever fails him. Even railway guards and other officials he will find the pink of civility and courteousness, provided he can get at them, and takes care not to stroke them the wrong way of the hair. He may not actually get them to do what he wants; but if professions of their readiness to put themselves out of their way to oblige satisfy him, he will have little reason to complain.

What the traveller cannot easily escape from in Italy, either at the beginning or at the end of his journey, is—Dirt. The Italians blend their love of the Beautiful with the most sublime indif-

ference to the Nasty. In their capacity of artists they look upon what a distinguished English statesman called "matter in the wrong place" as an element of the picturesque. In air that stifles other men they breathe freely; and to odours by which strangers with unacclimated noses are almost knocked down, their magnificent aquiline organs are supremely impervious.

Matters are mending in that respect, but very slowly. The dinginess and dreariness which awaited the traveller in that damp and clammy *café* at the Susa Terminus, on alighting from the foul diligence at the foot of Mont Cenis, are things of the past. You steal under the tunnel through the horrors that till so very lately beset the main gate of Italy, and come at once to the station of Turin, whence you are driven to your Hôtel d'Europe in Piazza Castello, finding in all these establishments a landing-place, hackney-coach, and inn—things not very much worse, if not actually better, than you have left behind in France or Switzerland. But the sepulchre is only white-washed at the best—the skeleton is barely hidden out of sight; and nothing struck me as more amusing than the pathetic appeal stuck up at every corner in the Milan Station, recommending a "reform in the people's habits" and the observance of the "common rules of decency," urging patriotic as well as hygienic arguments to shame people into something like "manners." There is evidently a wish for improvement, and there is room for it.

The Italians, a very pliable people, would readily abstain from things offensive if there were only a language to explain wherein the offence lies.

A foreign tourist, not over-fastidious and not unwilling to take things as they are, will find the people better companions than, judging by the evidence of his eyes or other senses, he might feel disposed to think. There is no stint in their talk when it begins, and nothing equals the courtesy with which they will meet any friendly advance of a stranger, or the freedom and frankness with which they will give utterance to their thoughts, forgetting his presence when intimacy justifies a flow of words.

I had a signal instance of this sociable disposition of the Italians on my first recrossing the Alps after a long lapse of years, in the middle of May. From November to April the first-class railway carriages are in a great measure monopolized by foreign tourists—"English and Princes," as the saying is on the Continent. But, in what travellers call the "dead season," and especially when you go against the tide, you fall in with few persons in these compartments besides the Deputies and Senators privileged to travel by free-ticket. I was the fourth in a carriage with three of these honourable gentlemen during the whole journey from Bologna to Florence and Rome. They were Northern men,—a Piedmontese and two Lombards,—members of the Italian Parliament ever since it came into existence, and all had had a hand in the building up of that

work of Italian nationality of which Cavour was the main architect.

They had met here from different regions and after several months' separation, and their first greetings were cordial and joyous, for there was gladness in every heart and hearth in Italy at the sight of the crops teeming with unwonted luxuriance all over the pleasant land. But after a good many private allusions and some friendly personal banter, my fellow-travellers fell almost unwittingly on that universal topic—public affairs, and then their manner was at once sobered, and a vein of sadness broke in upon their lively discourse. It was impossible, they thought, that Italy could ever regret having bravely asserted her right to self-government, but it would be vain to deny that she has not yet governed herself quite as wisely as might have been expected.

Their countrymen, they said, had been adroit politicians, but indifferent legislators and helpless administrators. The race of Cavours was extinct, and the country had no statesman at its head. Hardly anything went right in the various branches of State business. Here they were called to Rome on the irksome errand of imposing new burdens—to sit in a Parliament powerless to retrench public expenditure, or to devise the means for an equitable assessment and a regular collection of existing taxes. They could see nothing but shortcomings in the home administration; they com-

plained of the frequent miscarriage of justice, of the inefficiency of the police, of unsafe prisons; the perpetual cropping up of brigandage, murder stalking about in broad daylight; the law nowhere revered or obeyed; the re-organization of the Army and Navy slow and costly; public education an egregious failure, after all the schemes devised by a score of ministers following closely upon one another. To hear them, it would seem that not one of the fond dreams they had cherished in their youth, when they conspired as patriots of the Young Italy school, had proved true.

They had hoped that the abolition of their seven royal or ducal courts would usher in a cheap government, yet all the wealth of the country is insufficient to fill the greedy maw of the yearly deficit—deficit in the central and in a hundred local budgets.

They had hoped to relieve the people's distress by the removal of taxes on the necessaries of life, yet all eatables and drinkables, salt, and bread itself, never were subject to a more ruinous, senseless, and vexatious system of imposts and duties than they now are.

They had flattered themselves that they could curb the gambling propensities of the multitude, yet the utmost had been done to stimulate them by allowing a free scope to the immoral institution of the *Lotto*, or State Lottery, and by suffering the evasion of the laws forbidding games of hazard,

such as raffles, *tombolas*, and similar ventures, first on the plea of beneficence, and then without even that pretext.

They never doubted their ability to do away with mendicancy, yet beggars swarm in the streets almost as freely as they did under former rulers; and with the beggars, impudent sturdy varlets prowl about *cafés*, churches, and theatres, plying lawful or lawless trades, tendering honest or nameless services, and ready for swindle, larceny, or any graver offence for which they find opportunity.

Finally, they had reckoned on their power to free the populace from the grovelling superstition which the priests inculcated as religion, yet they either have found the priests too strong for them, or where they have shaken, without demolishing, the priestly edifice, they are alarmed at the rise of a hollow, craven, scoffing scepticism, shrinking from honest inquiry, averse from all earnest thought, and allowing no basis for any imaginable scheme of social morality.

It would be difficult to conceive anything more gloomy than the picture these well-meaning patriots, almost unawares, drew of the present condition of their country; and at the same time nothing could be more serene and sanguine than the confidence with which they looked forward to the future.

"The generation we have to legislate for," they said, "was vitiated to the core by the fallen Governments. The country which came into our hands

was a mere social wreck and ruin. It needed a thorough material and moral reconstruction. It little matters how slow the work may be, or by what failures it may be at first attended, provided it be carried on steadily, provided it be eventually thorough.

"The increase of the public welfare, the development of trade and industry, the progress and diffusion of knowledge, are already great facts—and they are undeniable. Nay, even this general uneasiness, this disgust and disquiet, this proneness to find fault, to grumble and look at the dark side of things"—the very propensity they were themselves at this moment so freely indulging—"what is it," they asked, "but a symptom of the country's aspiration to better things, and a pledge of its ability to attain the full length of its aims?"

By this time we were nearing our journey's end. Rome was in sight; and while my travelling companions were insensibly brightening up in their estimate of sublunar things, day dawned upon us, and lighted up the green of the growing crops in the field.

It was a goodly sight, and a cure for depressed spirits; and as we threw off our night-wrappers, and let down the window-sashes, we looked to one another with lighter hearts, feeling, though not saying, that "Heaviness endures for a night, but joy comes in the morning."

CHAPTER II.

THE ITALIAN CAPITAL.

1859 and 1874—Rome and her New Masters—Italian Life, North and South—Italy's Mission in Rome—The Rate of Progress in Rome—Obstacles in its Way—Two Cities in One City.

"HERE we are, and here we shall abide." I have King Victor Emmanuel's word for it. I was in Rome the last time fourteen years ago, in the winter of 1859-60, when the Pope or the Papal Government saw fit, for reasons which were never explained, to pack me off at twenty-four hours' notice. Here I am once more and no thanks to them. Those were difficult times for the Court of the Vatican, and some allowance should be made for their harsh and arbitrary treatment of one between whom and themselves instinct told them there could be no love lost. At that, for them, gloomy crisis, Ricasoli and Farini were meditating the annexation of the Tuscan and Emilian Provinces, consequently of the Papal Legations to Piedmont, and no one could know what further mischief the brooding mind of the autocrat of the Tuileries was preparing for that ecclesiastical State which his high protectorate had laid at his discre-

tion. The Pope had domestic enemies of his own in sufficient number, and there was no reason why an alien who had borne arms against him twenty-eight years before, should be added to their ranks. To hear was to obey then; I ordered out post-horses, drove with my little caravan all the way to Acquapendente, and here took off my wide-awake to the Papal gendarmes, who had politely escorted me, at a distance, all the way to the frontier, and I promised that they "should see me again." And am I not as good as my word? Castel Fidardo has been won, and Mentana lost. The September Convention was twice agreed to and twice violated; France's sword broke at Sedan; Napoleon III. sleeps at Chiselhurst, and the flag which I bore as an ensign in 1831 waves now on the battlements of Castle Sant' Angelo.

Now that they are in their long-coveted capital, what do the Italians think of it? What has become of the cry of "Rome or death!" for which Garibaldi was once wounded and twice imprisoned? I came to Rome about the middle of May and found the session of the Italian Parliament drawing to a close—not from want of work before the Houses, but from the weariness of their members, who had been sitting on and off since November. The interruption of the deliberations of the legislators owing to the absence of a legal number of voters has never been an uncommon occurrence in Italian parliamentary annals; but it is to be

observed that this dereliction of duty was far less frequent at Turin than at Florence, and far less frequent at Florence than it now is in Rome. This crescendo of idleness has become more and more perceptible as the capital was moved from north to south. There was a general complaint of all Italians against Turin that "the town was small and overcrowded, that its climate was gloomy and inclement, and that it was too monotonous and clean for an Italian town." Florence was not liable to these objections, yet the people again felt that they had "no abiding city" there. It was only a temporary seat of government, and few could be induced to make themselves at home in it. But Italy is now in Rome, in the city for which the Italians have so long been yearning, where aliens linger with such undying interest, which the poet addressed as "my country, city of the soul." Yet residence on the Tiber seems to have for its new rulers as little attraction as either of their former abodes on the Po or the Arno. Rome, the Italians begin to think, is too far south. The real strength of the country lies in the superior intelligence and culture, in the industry and energy, and in the higher moral character of those twelve or fourteen millions of northern people, who speak dialects hardly Italian, yet who have most powerfully contributed to work out the destinies of the nation. It is not man, but God, that creates a capital; and that of Italy people say ought to be in the centre of

that *Alta Italia*, of that compact mass of territory between the Alps and the Apennines which embraces Piedmont, Lombardy, and the Emilia. The capital ought to be, if not Turin, then Milan or Bologna.

Work and the wealth which springs from work, the northerners contend, can hardly be expected much below the forty-fifth degree of latitude. The *Fiacca*, as they call it, or *Fiaccona*, as the Romans more emphatically have it, seizes them. They find something irresistible in the depressing and enervating influence of this climate, and the religion of idleness lingers among a people who profess to have discarded all other belief. Summer has barely set in, and already the sturdiest among the Lombards and Piedmontese residing here complain that "their legs are being cut off from under them." "The Italians," they add, "expressed such a horror of being Piedmontized, and lo! they are now being rapidly Neapolitanized." It takes only seven hours to travel from Naples to Rome, while the journey from Milan to Turin can as yet, at the quickest, only be achieved in twenty hours. The attendance of the deputies from north and south is greatly affected by this trifling distance, and the former state of things is completely reversed by it. Instead of the northern, the southern element greatly preponderates in the Chamber, and with it an endless flow of words, a lawyer-like turn of argument, exaggerated and distorted political and social notions.

Except Members of Parliament and the whole host of unfortunate Government officials—who are ground to dust by the landlords of inns and lodging-houses and are perpetually dunning their chiefs for leave of absence, to the great detriment of the Administration—few Italians have as yet visited Rome, and fewer have settled in it. Those few tradesmen whose shops are, so to say, the stage properties of the capital, and who have followed it from Turin to Florence, Jew clothiers, Court jewellers, Italian and foreign booksellers, &c., drive hitherto no very thriving trade, and some have already failed. Nay, more! Even the Café Cesano, a new establishment opened at Monte Citorio, and intended as a kind of Bellamy for the members of the Lower House, has had to shut up, and Rome is, as it ever was, without any of the first rudiments of Italian social life — without a café or a theatre worthy of the name. It seems as if nothing could be made out of a city which is only habitable for six months in the year. It is not that the temperature is much higher in Rome than in Milan or Bologna, or that the Italians have any great dread of malaria fever; indeed, the sea air here is, for several months, quite delicious, and people have reason to complain rather of the fickleness than of any excess of the Roman climate. But in the north the nerves are braced by a few months of severe winter. Here at Rome, life is enjoyment from October to April, and there is nothing to harden

the human frame against the fiery ordeal which awaits it from May to September.

There is nothing in all this that should not have been known before, nothing that cool-headed patriots like Massimo d' Azeglio had not emphatically foretold. Rome should, as the Emperor Napoleon advised, have been left to the Romans, to "church ceremonies and the worship of ruins." And indeed if the Italians came here, if they so loudly clamoured to come here, it was because they had no choice in the matter, and the necessity which brought them, they ought to understand, will equally compel them to stay here. "*A Roma ci siamo e ci resteremo,*" are words which King Victor Emmanuel has engraved in bronze in every Italian heart, and which every Italian tongue repeats every day with an air of bravado. The storming of Porta Pia was the accomplishment of a mission; it was, on the part of Italy, a work of self-sacrifice. It was only in Rome, if anywhere, that the Pope could be overcome. The whole world combined to give Italy to the Italians; the Italians could do no less than take Rome for the world's sake. The quarrel between Italy and the Pope, *i.e.* between State and Church throughout Christendom, could only be fought out here; and the question has only been clumsily and temporarily settled, not solved. It would be re-opened the moment Italy turned her back upon Rome. The task which the Italians assumed must be

accomplished, no matter at what inconvenience to themselves, for what is of moment to the rest of mankind is vitàl to them.

The Italians who so ardently longed for Rome ought to have known that, however cheaply the town could be had, it could only be held at a very high cost. They ought to have borne in mind that they came to a place where there was everything to be done,—a city to be socially and morally as well as materially conquered,—a city to be colonized, filled with people, drained, embanked, fumigated, swept and scoured—cleansed from the corruption and pollution of ages. Of the schemes for embanking the Tiber, for draining, tilling, and colonizing the Campagna, we hear less and less every day. Commissions have been sitting upon those subjects. "Sedent in æternumque sedebunt." Of the great thoroughfares that are to strike light and air through the unwholesome wards of the Papal City, little more than the lines have as yet been traced—on paper. With the exception of a few half-finished blocks of buildings near the station at Piazza di Termini, round the Macao or Prætorian Camp, about Santa Maria Maggiore, and along the new Via Nazionale, very few new dwellings are rising. Most of the houses have been scraped and tidied and white-washed, it is true; some have been raised two or three stories; the city is lighted with gas, and some of the *Immondezzai*, or dung-heaps, have been removed; theft and murder are somewhat less

rife, and the *razzias* among the old swarms of loathsome beggars, though only hasty and fitful, have not been altogether unsuccessful; but the civilization of the newly emancipated city is as yet barely skin-deep; and as to the Campagna, I was shocked the other day to hear a statesman at the head of affairs declare that "it was work to be left for after-generations."

I am aware of the immense magnitude of the task which lies before the Italian Government, and of the sadly inadequate means with which they are striving to accomplish it. Neither Rome nor the *Gens Romana* was built in a day. But the first condition of life for this place is that there should be a Roman people, or rather an Italian people in Rome. It is necessary to bring half a million of souls to the spot, and, for that purpose, great changes must be made in the social and political circumstances, not only of the capital, but of the whole country itself. In the first place, Rome must have a Court, it must have its "Upper Ten Thousand," it must develope an intellectual, commercial, and industrial activity. The King himself is rather encamped than settled here. There is some truth in Monseigneur Dupanloup's taunt, that "Il n'ose pas y faire son lit." The Roman Princes with few exceptions keep aloof from him, and it will only be after the death of the present Pope, to whom many of them are personally attached, that it may be hoped they will be

reconciled to the new order of things. Indeed, several of the younger members, and some of the heads of these princely families bearing the names of Colonna, Orsini, Odescalchi, &c., have wavered in their allegiance, and are either doing homage to the new powers, or pressing forward into every department of public life. But of the other Italian nobility, not one has as yet been induced to take up his quarters in Rome, even for a season. The great Milanese and Neapolitan land-owners are as much *adscripti glebæ* as their plodding husbandmen. The prestige that attaches in England to country life clings in Italy to provincial residence. The untravelled Lombard nobleman, who feels himself a great man in his palace at Milan, dreads absorption and, as it were, loss of caste in the modest apartments to which he must, at least for some time and for the fulfilment of his senatorial duties, accommodate himself at Rome. Italy has been for centuries accustomed to many petty centres. Even in dead places like Ferrara or Ravenna, or mere boroughs like Lugo or Bagnacavallo, there are clubs or *casinos* for grandees with purses as short as their pedigrees are long, and who think all the more of themselves at home as they know that people would think nothing of them abroad. It is in this consciousness of insignificance that local patriotism casts its deepest roots. Every Italian patrician is a Cæsar, and would rather "be first at Scaricalasino than

second in Rome." The dreamy dullness of their grass-grown streets, the frivolity and inanity of their daily intercourse, have nothing so formidable for them as the turmoil of a large and striving society, in which they would have to work hard merely to keep afloat. The Italians, like other Latin races, know no other thrift than that of niggardly economy; people of all classes here pinch and slave; they starve lest they should have to work to eat. The whole nation and its army have, in the opinion of most strangers, an underfed look. There is little progress possible on such conditions; there is little aspiration or enterprise, little curiosity, and, whatever people may say or think to the contrary, little real love of the beautiful now-a-days in Italian hearts. Very few Italians come to Rome for pleasure, and of those whom political or other business brings here, hardly any bestow one hour of their day on those monuments of art and antiquity which make Rome a museum, and to which visitors of other nations devote their lifetime. Matters cannot long continue in this state, I am sure. New spirits must arise with new generations; but, in the meanwhile, this sluggish disposition of the people, combining with the all-pervading disorder of the administration, and the disastrous state of the finances, will for an indefinite time conspire to check the growth and development of the Italian capital.

Yet we may be allowed to believe that Rome will

in time make good her claims to the proud title of the "Eternal City," and that the future has a greatness in store for her which will hardly give her reason to regret the past. Many people in Italy live in full faith of a possible reconciliation between the Vatican and the Quirinal, a consummation which, whatever influence it may exercise upon the faith of mankind and upon the freedom of the Italian people, will have the immediate effect of making Rome the residence of two Courts and the centre of two empires. And, indeed, even in the uncertainty of what the morrow may bring, the city already benefits from the income of two states, as, together with the revenue of the Italian kingdom, the mass of the enormous wealth that is poured into the coffers of the Vatican leaks out in a variety of manners, and finds its way into the pockets of the emancipated Romans. If mere wealth could prolong the days of an ailing octogenarian, Pope Pius IX. would have little reason to be apprehensive of his approaching end. Huge strong boxes, laden with gold and precious stones, not unfrequently pass through the Italian custom-houses, on their way to the "Apostolic captive." The Holy Father has, the story goes, little cups or goblets on his writing-table before him, filled with unset gems of great value, out of which he occasionally takes little driblets to give as presents to his most favourite attendants and visitors, making as free with the glittering baubles as if he

were merely dispensing pinches of snuff. Well may he dispense with the 3,200,000 f. allowed him by the Italian nation in compliance with the law of Papal guarantees, and well may he afford to refuse the additional 400,000 f. subsequently voted by the Italian Parliament to defray the expenses of the heads of religious orders. The Pope is rich, enormously rich, richer than he ever was when he disposed of the revenue of his ill-governed state. And what becomes of the treasures which reach him from all the communities of Europe and America, of the "sticks of solid gold, of the nuggets and purses full of doubloons," which pilgrims from both hemispheres lay at his feet? Why, whether the givers and receivers of all this wealth like it or not, the "ungrateful populace" of what was once the Papal city are none the worse for it. People find it natural that, "if the Church is to be universal, it should be maintained at the expense of the whole Catholic world," and that "if its seat is to be in Rome, this city should come in for an ample share of its good things." The new state of affairs has necessarily the effect of greatly increasing the number of foreign visitors. As many come for the King as for the spiritual King of Kings. The hotels which used to be closed as May or June set in are now keeping open house throughout the summer, and their *tables-d'hôte* are at all times numerously attended. The snug old houses of accommodation which ministered to the comforts of

English lords and Russian princes in the purlieus of Via Condotti, or between Piazza di Spagna and Piazza del Popolo, are being eclipsed by huge caravanserais rising everywhere on the hills, in Piazza Barberini, in Via San Nicolò da Tolentino and Via Nazionale. We have two cities here, two capitals, two aristocracies, two cabinets, two diplomatic circles, two peoples, two separate and antagonistic sets of social interests. It will be well for Rome if, with the enjoyment of this double wealth and greatness, she does not soon begin to exhibit the symptoms of a double corruption.

CHAPTER III.

ROME AND THE ROMANS.

The Pincio—A Bird's-eye View of Rome—Distant View—The Vatican—The Capitol—The Quirinal—Near View—St. Angelo—The Pantheon, &c.—The Roman People—A Roman Holiday.

To see Rome one must go to the Pincio; to see the Romans one must wait for a holiday; and on a holiday at a certain hour one can have on the Pincio a view both of the city and of its people.

What would not Paris or London, or what would not Berlin, give for such a promenade as the Pincian Hill? The Pincio is not much of a mountain, for, by a flight of 135 marble steps, one can walk up from the Piazza di Spagna to the terrace of the Trinità dei Monti, which is almost on a level with the Pincian summit, and one can drive two good horses in five minutes from the Piazza del Popolo up the easy winding avenue which leads to the culminating esplanade on the Pincio itself. The Pincio is also not much of a promenade, for a man can go twice round it in a quarter of an hour, and it is a marvel how a young prince's coach-and-six can manage to turn its corners with safety. Even

with such modest proportions, however, the spot has the advantage of being both a mountain and a promenade—a promenade upon a mountain; a picturesque object in itself, with a view over a multitude of picturesque objects all round. Place it in a plain, surround it with the walls of a palace, and it will make a garden of moderate size but of unsurpassed loveliness; but reared as it is on its hundred-feet platform, fenced on two sides by lofty walls, and laid out in front with terraces, where rostral columns, statues, and pinnacles break through the dense green of a semi-tropical vegetation, it has charms for the eye that nature and art could not easily match anywhere else.

Books have been written to inform a traveller how to see Rome in six months—how to see it in twelve days; but the Pincio enables a man to see Rome—all at least of Rome that is not a ruin—at one glance; not by such a bird's-eye view as may be had of London from St. Paul's or Highgate, or of Paris from the Invalides, but by a series of home prospects almost as much within the reach of a man's hand as within the compass of his vision, and varying at every step as he saunters leisurely around.

From the terrace before the church of the Trinità dei Monti,—a bastion from which one would think a battery fired on the city *à bout portant* would lay it in ashes in two hours,—the road turns imperceptibly under a double row of acacias, evergreen

oaks, and other trees, past the massive Villa Medici, now the Academy of France; it enters the promenade by a gentle ascent; it reaches first one, then another, then a third terrace, each stretching out further than the other, till one comes to the main esplanade, and stands upon the foremost platform, reared high above the Piazza del Popolo, where the view is most extensive and unobstructed.

It is both a town and country view. On your right, as you look westward, you have the dense forest of the Villa Borghese outside the walls, at this season a mass of vivid tints from every imaginable variety of blossoms, of which you only catch glimpses wherever gaps in the foliage of the garden where you stand allow the eye to wander beyond the surrounding town-wall, and down into the low ground beneath. Between the high knolls and steep banks by which that villa is flanked, and the wide-sweeping skirts of Monte Mario, there runs, issuing from the Piazza del Popolo and through the Porta del Popolo, the Flaminian highway, the mean buildings which rise on both sides of it, nearly as far as Ponte Molle, being happily hid out of sight by the thick curtain of evergreens in the foreground. As the eye wanders slowly to the south-west, the undulating ridge of Monte Mario unfolds itself in graceful curves before us, its highest summit crowned by the cypresses of the old Villa Millini, with the "Turner pine"—a familiar object in so many of the great artist's pictures—on the

steep; the hill-sides scarred here and there with the furrows of flower-gardens and vineyards, which the thrifty owners of some staring new buildings on the adjoining heights are trying to plant on a soil formerly all mantled with a wild tangled bush.

Between the hill and the Tiber—the yellow stream is invisible here—there lie the Prati di Castello, those fields on which a new town—not, let us hope, in our time—is expected to rise; hill-side and plain just now a pleasing expanse of fresh young verdure. Quite at our feet, between us and the river, is the Piazza del Popolo, with its church domes, its fountains, its huge obelisk, and its cypress-fringe facing us on the opposite side; and above the Piazza, above the cypresses, in the very centre of the prospect, almost due south, across the level and about a mile off, behold the ninth wonder of the world, St. Peter's and the Vatican!—the Church revealed from the cross on the dome down to the cornice of the horse-shoe colonnade; the palace a shapeless mass of masonry, with the thickly-planted Papal pleasaunce on a truncated cone in the centre, and the dark, mouldy towers of the city walls in the rear; the mansions of many Popes, with their eleven thousand chambers, piled up on one another, the outer walls here and there pierced with loop-holes and bristling with battlements,—an architectural jumble, half convent, half fortress, covering as much space as the Palatine,

and sure to fall one day into as cumbrous a ruin as the palace of the Cæsars.

To the left of the spot where that monument of priestly pride, wickedness and folly looms so portentous, the long ridge of the Janiculum fences in the Trastevere, winding with the river that flows at its feet, its smooth crest dotted with the stone pines which enshroud Tasso's tomb at Sant' Onofrio, and displaying on its slope the verdure of the Salviati, Barberini, and other villas, from the midst of which emerge the platform of San Pietro in Montorio, the fountain of the Acqua Paola rushing from its three great cataracts, all glancing in the sun, the Pancrazio Gate, and close to it the ruin of the Vascello, that suburban villa which was the focus of so much hard fighting at the time when Garibaldi's red-shirts saw the backs of Oudinot's French soldiers.

Further eastwards the hill range is lost to view, leaving a wide depression in the ground where the Tiber flows, and the level Campagna, dimmed by distance, fades from our view. Across the river and its broad valley the Capitoline Hill ascends, with the white-washed Caffarelli Palace—the Imperial German Legation—on its brow; and next to it, partly masked by the uncouth mass of the church and convent of Ara Cœli, rise the slender tower and buildings of which Michael Angelo was the mason. In the rear of the Capitol, at various gaps between the roofs, cypress groves

and convent steeples mark the site of the Palatine, the Aventine, and the other localities where ancient Rome is being unburied. The skeleton of the dead city lies thus behind a screen away from us. The scene before us is all lively and sunny, and the glimpses we catch of the Campagna are too indistinct to strike us with a sense of its dreariness.

From the Capitol, as we turn a little on our heel to the left, we pass on to the Quirinal. There, behind that dark, telescope-shaped mediæval tower, which bears the name Delle Milizie, and stands up alone like a warrior in armour, we have before us the royal residence, filling up an enormous area—a massive structure, with a ravelin at the base once bristling with cannon; the obelisk with the Greek horses and grooms of Monte Cavallo facing its entrance, and, stretching out for a quarter of a mile in its rear, the Manica Lunga, that corridor with a row of seventy cells, till lately the scene of the Papal conclaves, now the abode of the King's *aides-de-camp* and domestics, at the end of which Victor Emmanuel has just built a pavilion for his own private home, with a bower for his Rosina on the upper floor, as far away from the former state apartments as he could contrive, yet not far enough to release him from that *puzza di prete* which renders the spot so irksome to him. This long range of the Quirinal hides the whole district of the Quattro Fontane,

the Barberini Palace, and the Via Sistina, and comes almost into contact with the Trinità dei Monti, the twin steeples of its church, its handsome flight of steps, and the towers of the Villa Medici, the landmarks from which we took our start, and which shut in our view on this side.

As much of Rome as can be seen from the Pincio lies enclosed within a vast shell or cup between the Janiculum on one side and the Quirinal on the other, the Capitol being thrown partially as a screen athwart the intervening ground where the valley diverges. The panorama does not extend beyond the inhabited or habitable city, but whatever we see is seen thoroughly and distinctly. We are at home in the Roman homes, or would be if a friendly Asmodeus would only lift up the roofs, most of which are nearly on a level with us. As we look down upon these roofs, our first impression is that of utter bewilderment, and we hardly know on which of so many cupolas, towers, and steeples, terraces, obelisks, columns, and arches, we should first fix our attention. Out of the confused mass of objects in that outstretched *relievo* map, we vainly for some time strive to descry the most familiar, as the perpetual play of light and shade in this rich atmosphere perplexes our vision and disturbs our perception. Is that Castle Sant' Angelo so dimly glooming in the gauze-like Tiber haze a little to the left of St. Peter's dome, and lying between us

and the crest of the Janiculum at Sant' Onofrio? It is indeed, and as we look, the round tower—pattern of the rook on the chess-board—and the bastions at its base, and the sprawling bronze St. Michael on the top, start into the light, and with them the wall tracing the long covered way—now jealously closed up—through which the Popes of old, when threatened with danger at the Vatican, hurried "with the spoons" to the refuge of their blood-stained stronghold.

Further to the left, between the obtrusive cupola of San Carlo al Corso and the top of the Antonine Column of Piazza Colonna,—two of the landmarks which enable us to follow the line of the Corso, the main artery of the city,—is not that Agrippa's great flat dome of the Pantheon, in the shape of a huge oven, with the two little squat belfries with which ecclesiastical taste has disfigured it? And thus, proceeding from west to east, we can single out the back of Monte Citorio, with the semi-circular wooden shed where the representatives of the Italian nation are wrangling, and closer to the Capitol, the Collegio Romano, the Gesù, the Palazzo di Venezia, and as many of the 365 churches, of the monasteries, princely palaces, and other private or public buildings as are known to fame. There they are all before us, if we take pains to single out the gables, the belvederes, the rows of chimney-tops of the humbler tenements, from the masses of the more prominent structures which strive to

obstruct them. It is thus not without difficulty, and not without wonder, that we behold the huge statue of a saint standing up apparently on nothing, till we perceive that the Colonna, Odescalchi, and Valentini Palaces of the Piazza degli Apostoli hide the column on which that saint is perched, on the lofty station from which Trajan was hurled to make room for him.

All of Rome and of Roman dwellings between the garrets and the basements we have at our discretion. Of the ground itself we do not see one inch besides the area of the Piazza del Popolo immediately beneath our feet; not one square foot of the narrow labyrinth of streets and squares, and not one soul of the multitude swarming, jostling, and hindering one another therein. We do not see, in one word, more than we should wish to see. There is but little that is artistically beautiful in the mere outside of most Roman edifices, whether we look at them from above or from below. All the charm lies in their grandeur, and this shines forth to the greatest advantage when they are thus heaped and huddled together as they now appear before us. The peculiar delight with which this Pincian panorama fills us arises from the lovely perspective—the endless variety of objects which the uneven nature of the ground stretches out before us; from the happy chance which clusters them in bold Titanic groups; and finally from the graceful outline of the hills making up the frame of

the picture, and from the deep-blue sky lighting it up from above.

For many months in the year, and for many hours of the morning and afternoon all the year round, you may have the Pincio all to yourself, or only come across a novel-reading English damsel, a brooding German professor, an obese Russian matron "doing Banting," or, very early in the morning, a fallen statesman whom loss of place has made a *mauvais coucheur*. It is only on a summer evening and for about one hour at sunset that the Roman people are to be met here. To see Rome, or, indeed, any part of Italy, at its best, one should visit it in the warm season. For nearly six months in the year the people here hybernate, and only come out, like lizards, under the influence of the dog-star. In Rome especially, and further south, a drop of rain, or the mere dread of it, is sufficient to shut up the inmates of any dwelling with doors and windows to it. The winter is to them tedious, if not severe, and the spring lingering and fickle. Constitution-day, the *Festa dello Statuto*, had to be shifted from March to May, and from May to June, because before the sixth month "you are never safe from a shower," and the green in the national flag can stand no wet. This year the weather has been unusually provoking, and has put its veto on much out-door enjoyment. The Romans besides look upon winter festivities as something to be left to their foreign visitors. At Christmas, in

the Carnival, and at Easter, St. Peter's, the Corso, and the Veglione are, in a great measure, crowded with Americans, Russians, and other frequenters of what is still called the "Ghetto Inglese," that cluster of lodging-houses of which Via Condotti is the centre. But an Italian *festa* is a treat in the open air, and the natives only appreciate its charms when they are left alone with their sunny climate. Of such blessed days the Calendar, in Rome at least, supplies one besides the Sunday for every week. The inhabitants of the Holy City are almost as strict Sabbatarians as the Scotch—the seventh day is set apart for religion and recreation; but Rome, unlike Edinburgh, takes a pound's-worth of recreation to its sober halfpenny-worth of religion. The laws of the Italian kingdom have limited the festive days, besides the Sundays, to eight in the year; but I have been in Rome for several weeks, and have seen at least one holiday weekly over and above the Sundays. The sulking Pope has curtailed many of the Church shows by which he used to stimulate the devotion of his faithful Romans; but these, staunch in that religion of "all play and no work" in which he has trained them, continue to keep idle, if not holy, their saints' days, as much, one would say, now to spite him as they formerly did to please him. I do not think one out of the 250,000 odd people who constitute the Roman population kept within doors yesterday for half-an-hour. Towards noon and up

to one o'clock they were all on the Corso. The last Mass—*Messa dei Belli*, or *Messa degli Ostinati*—was said, and every rag of muslin, silk, and lace was paraded up and down the only Roman thoroughfare between the Piazza del Popolo and Piazza di Venezia. Towards sunset, between seven and eight, they all crowded on the Pincio. Later, and till very late at night, the rendezvous was at Piazza Colonna, and, in the intervals, the *cafés*, the restaurants, the beer-houses, of which since 1870 the name is legion, were swarming with high and low. The Italians are an unenterprising race; their tastes are simple; the sphere of their enjoyment is limited; their pleasure consists in seeing and being seen. They are birds of a feather and love to flock together. They have their Villa Borghese, their Villa Doria, their hundred other earthly paradises, close to the city gates and hospitably thrown open to them; but neither their legs, nor even their horses' legs, can carry them any further than the Corso, the Pincio, and the Piazza Colonna. It is only later in the year, *alla rinfrescata*, when the first autumn breeze has laid the demon of the malaria, that the citizens venture out in their *botti*, or one-horse flys, for their delicious *ottobrate*. For the present to breathe is the great business of life, and the Romans require little room to do it in. The pleasure consists in going out to breathe together, and if it is to be enjoyed it must not be diluted. Pleasure it may be, and perhaps it is,

but it is not fun. The people saunter on, demure and dignified, absorbed in the common task of admiring and laying themselves out for admiration. The Corso is lined with magnificent buildings; the Pincio, as we have seen, is if the smallest yet the finest promenade in Europe. The Piazza Colonna exhibits one of the most glorious and best preserved monuments of antiquity; but the Romans have only eyes for each other. And indeed there is enough in the motley crowd to charm the most fastidious eye. Everybody in Rome above a beggar's rank keeps a carriage, and for the beggar himself there are thousands of hackney conveyances, some of them not easily distinguishable in shape, and often in neatness, from the superb equipages in which princes are lolling. When bent on "doing grand" the Roman never cares for economy, and knows nothing of social inequalities. In his heart of hearts he is as good as any man, and indeed better.

In the Corso two carriages can hardly pass each other without difficulty. In the Pincio there is "scarcely room to swing a cat." Yet hundreds and thousands of vehicles of every description are dashing or creeping upon one another—rolling and apparently floating isles everywhere beset by the heaving and surging pedestrian tide; a mass of bipeds and quadrupeds jostling together, contending for every inch of space, but warranted against loss of life or limb or loss of temper; men and beasts well behaved,

long-suffering, true to the old Roman device, "*Patiens dominabitur astris.*" What a moment this is for the Pincio! The sun does not set now, as it does any time between Carnival and Easter, behind the Vatican Hill, its last beams gleaming through the windows of the leaden dome of St. Peter's, like fiery eyes between the bars of a warrior's visor; it has shifted its path, and sinks far away from the great church, behind the cypress row on Monte Mario, the dark funereal foliage so dear to the Italians all glowing in the crimson light as it wanes gradually yet very rapidly in their rear. But the Romans have little leisure or inclination to bestow a glance upon the gorgeous sight of which a stranger's eye never tires. They have enough to do to look at objects nearer and dearer to man's eyes than all inanimate things. The princely equipages of the Papal families are all on the spot, drawn up in the central avenue, near the music-stand, jammed together as in the Hyde Park "Ladies' Mile." Every carriage has its bouquet of lovely women, and at the doors of each, on either side, gallant cavaliers cluster like bees. None but the very poor and some forlorn Englishman, tarrying at Rome alone like a "last rose of summer," would undertake the five minutes' ascent to the Pincio on foot. There are scarcely any equestrians. Your Roman fine gentleman sits or reclines languidly in his carriage like a fine lady, for he must not soil his patent-leather boots or

moisten his light slate-coloured kid gloves. But when his coach has carried him up to the top, the doors are thrown open, the steps are let down, and the earth receives the print of the great man's footsteps. With his ebony stick in his right hand and a flower or scent-bottle in his left, the *principino* moves on from carriage to carriage, as he does at the opera from box to box, offering to one after another of the *principessine*, or, if these are otherwise engaged, to the little Maltese or Bologna pet on the back seat, the homage of his innocent small talk. The nodding and bobbing, the flirting of fans and waving of hands and handkerchiefs, give the scene a lively and animated appearance. Of these ladies in the carriages many are lovely; most of them stately and graceful, elegant in dress and bearing, languid and impassive in attitude. It is a high-bred, well-mannered race; still, one can go lower and fare even better. In no part of the world—London and perhaps New York or Baltimore excepted—can so much female beauty be seen collected as in Rome. The sun is never allowed to catch more than a glimpse of the women's faces, and their *carnagione* or *bel sangue* in so southern a latitude is truly a marvel. It is not a hardy, healthy complexion, perhaps; you can see the effects of stay-at-home, sedentary habits; but lilies and roses blend on their cheeks with the most exquisite harmony. They are mere greenhouse flowers, tender and somewhat waxy; but

while young the colours are life-like, and you take the fragrance for granted. And then their eyes!

What seems to me remarkable in Rome is that you have all the ranks of society here thrown together, yet no confusion, no intrusion, no envy or disdain, no apparent wish to overstep even conventional boundaries—in one word, no snobbism is apparent. Everybody in Rome knows his place, and seems to like it best. The traditions of the ancient Plebs and Patriciate may have something to do with it, but certain it is that the velvet-jacketed *Montignano*, in his *bagherino* or *biroccino*, drives his little gaily caparisoned, plumed and tasselled fiery barb close to the duke's glittering coach-and-four, and the slender-waisted, yet buxom, crimson-petticoated *Trasteverina* follows her princess as *bambinaia*, or nurse, walking with the stateliness of a queen—the minor mortals hardly ever looking up at their "betters," or only with a modest yet firm assurance, acknowledging, as it were, the difference, yet satisfied that the advantage is not all on one side, and that all things have been ordained for the best.

There is a rush from the Pincio the moment the sun has set, for the Romans have a somewhat superstitious dread of "dewy eve," and the promenade in summer is shut up at twilight from hygienic considerations and by order. For about half-an-hour the thronging of the multitude all along that only thoroughfare of the Corso is something appal-

ling; but by degrees order rises out of chaos. Most of the carriages come to anchor before the doors of some of the hundred glaring *cafés*, where the ladies have ices handed to them as they sit, while the pedestrians are seated in long rows of chairs and benches before the same doors, enjoying the same cooling comforts, or ranged in a dense mass on the four sides of Piazza Colonna to enjoy the free concert given by the band of one of the King's regiments—for the Romans, like most other people, dearly love an amusement where there is nothing to pay.

Of this simple and harmless nature are the enjoyments of a Roman holiday. The people celebrate it wholly within their gates—within the precincts of two or three favoured spots less than a mile in extent. They take a little air, exhibit themselves in their finery, interchange a few civilities, indulge in some cheap luxuries, perhaps allow themselves some more or less innocent flirtation. But the charm of it all is that for that day they do no work. Eternal blessings on San Filippo Neri! For this one day at least they do not "earn their bread in the sweat of their brow." Why should they? Who cares for bread when all he wants is *acqua Marcia* and ice? Sella or Minghetti, or any other Minister of Finance, may plague them with heavy taxes. They may have to learn to work for him if not for themselves. But, in the meanwhile, one holiday is *autant de pris sur l'ennemi*. Time enough

to think of the shop to-morrow. And the toils of the morrow will be lightened by the thought that Sunday is at hand, and perhaps between this and Sunday some other ease-loving saint may interpose to give them another spell of the Corso, the Pincio, and the Piazza Colonna.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD AND NEW ROME.

Papal and Italian Rome—Roman Thoroughfares—Cruelty to Animals—Roman Improvements—The Via Nazionale—The Corso—New Quarters—Prati di Castello—Ancient and Modern Rome—Preservation of Ruins—Roman Museums—Archæological Liberality—Peculiarities of National Character.

PAPAL Rome was, after Constantinople, the most backward and uncomfortable city in modern Europe. Those who have undertaken to turn it to the purposes of the capital of a civilized kingdom begin to find out that things must necessarily get much worse before there is any chance of their mending at all.

In the first place, Rome in ancient and mediæval times boasted many gates, and "all roads led to it." But since the construction of railways, and the concentration of their several lines at one station near Piazza di Termini, the only avenue to the city lies now, and must perhaps for ever lie, along the slopes of the Viminal and Quirinal Hills, through which there is as yet only one practicable thoroughfare; and it is that which, by the Via di San Nicolò da Tolentino and Via del

Tritone, reaches comparatively level ground in the Via dell' Angelo Custode, and hence by the Via delle Muratte, leads from the Fountain of Trevi to Piazza Sciarra adjoining Piazza Colonna, the centre of that great artery of Rome—the Corso. The poor wight who commits the mistake of choosing his quarters in the immediate neighbourhood of this only line of communication between the outer world and the very heart of the city must relinquish every hope of mental or bodily rest.

For the crowding of public and private vehicles, all bound to the same goal, the tugging up hill of heavy-laden omnibuses, carts and vans, jammed in between the vans, carts and omnibuses groaning as they roll down hill with all their drags on, the cruel whips, the shouts and howls and oaths by which drivers, cads, carters and helpers urge on their sorry cattle, and the shrieks of the foot-passengers as they shrink into doorways and shops for refuge from hoofs and wheels,—all this makes of the whole quarter a pandemonium from which peace is banished from early morn to a late hour at night.

Men still young remember the happy time when nearly the only conveyances toiling up these narrow ascents were the rumbling coaches in which sleek cardinals lolled as they went for their afternoon airing out of Porta Pia, or the well-appointed landaus and phaetons conveying princely families on a weekly visit to their suburban villas. But

since 1848 the sovereign people have learnt to ride and drive, and your luxurious Roman would barter his very soul for a *carrozzata*. We have here almost as many public conveyances as there are in Paris or London, and to their perpetual plying to and fro must be added the turmoil and bustle of the hundreds of carts full of heavy materials, bricks, stones, and timber, all struggling on their various ways to what are one day to be the new quarters of the modernized city.

The King himself has no better way into Rome, though the way out is sufficiently wide open to him, and nothing is more pitiful than to see his grand retinue, with his half-dozen gilt carriages and his mounted hundred guards, descending the Hill of the Dataria and threading the Via dell' Umittà to the Corso, when His Majesty proceeds in state to open Parliament at Monte Citorio, room being scarcely allowed to the National Guards along the line of march to present arms to their sovereign.

Papal Rome has been at all times "le Paradis des prêtres et l'Enfer des chevaux," and it is doubtful whether the newly instituted Society for the Protection of Animals, of which Lady Paget, the wife of the English Minister, has been the soul, will be able to achieve much towards the mitigation of the sufferings of the dumb creation. One would say that a carter in Rome considers savage yells, horrid oaths, and blows with the butt-end

of his loaded whip, with a heavy cudgel, or with the handle of a pitchfork, good substitutes for hay and corn to keep up the courage of his team, and to stimulate them to supernatural exertions. All the hilly thoroughfare I have been describing is a never-ceasing battle-field between man and beast. It is not that all these drivers and carters are deliberately inhuman, or dead to all sympathy with their four-footed servants; in many instances they are to be seen with their shoulders to the wheel, tugging for very life, anxious to share the toil which, as they well perceive, too far exceeds the powers of their half-starved cattle. But why their cattle should be so wretchedly fed, and why the weight they are made to draw should be so iniquitously out of all proportion to their strength, is what never seems to strike either the men themselves or their employers, or the authorities whose business it ought to be to think for them.

There is as much sheer stolidity as actual brutality in the recklessness with which animals are here killed by over-work and ill-treatment. The man takes upon himself and sets his cattle an impossible task; he insists upon it with dogged obstinacy, frets against obstacles, and chafes at mishaps, his wrath rising with every slip or stumble of his jaded beast till he works himself into a towering passion, when, utterly blind with rage, he flings himself upon the unoffending

quadruped, and visits upon him the consequences of his own improvidence and unreason. Try a gentle remonstrance with your hackney-coachman on behalf of his horse, and he will tell you that the butt-end of his whip "*non gli fa male; non è Cristiano*" (it does not hurt him; he is not a Christian, *i. e.*, human being). Horse-flesh is in his opinion mere inanimate matter. But venture to scold the man as he deserves, and he will show you the handle of his knife and threaten to stab you—a threat which, I am told, has been held out to ladies who showed more zeal than discretion in the cause of humanity.

Liberty to use or abuse his beast has always been granted to the subject in Papal Rome, and it is painful to see so little improvement in that respect in the capital of the Italian kingdom. In a city where almost every third person one used to meet in the streets was a priest or monk, it seemed incredible that religion should have achieved so little towards softening man's savagery; and in a city where now sits a Parliament, and where a complicate administration is at work, it appears hardly credible that the law should take no notice of ruffians and miscreants who starve, maul, maim, cripple, and scourge within an inch of its life the defenceless creature over which the Maker can certainly have given man no rights without exacting the fulfilment of corresponding duties.

In imitation of what has been done in Turin,

Florence, and Palermo, a society, as I said, has been instituted in Rome to preach or enforce kindness to animals, and their well-meant efforts have not altogether been fruitless. But to go to the root of the evil one must go to the foundation of the city itself. So long as the streets are so narrow, the hills so steep, and the pavements so slippery, the horses will have a hard life of it, and the men themselves, both those who drive horses and those among whom they are driven, will fare no better. Rome will have to be levelled as well as rebuilt, for the obstacles raised at every step against improvement are such as would dishearten Baron Haussmann himself.

With a view to relieve the pressure of the traffic, which is choking up the only way to and from the station now in existence,—that before described of the Tritone and San Nicolò da Tolentino,—the Romans are at work on the Via Nazionale, originally planned by the late Monsignor de Merode in Papal times, and taken up at first with great spirit under the auspices of the Italian Government. This new thoroughfare, starting from the Piazza di Termini, near the station, with its outlet formed by the ancient hemicycle of Diocletian's Baths, slides gently down the side of the Viminal Hill to a point on the Via delle Quattro Fontane, near Santa Maria Maggiore, whence it slopes further down to the garden in the rear of the Rospigliosi Palace at Monte Cavallo; then, turning almost at right angle

round the base of the hill, it is to follow the Via della Pilotta and Via dei Lucchesi to the crossing of the Via della Dataria, and on to the Fountain of Trevi, and hence by another turn at right angle it will debouch through one of the most densely crowded quarters of Rome to the Corso. This "National Street," however, must be the work of many years. The little that has been hitherto done at the upper end is sufficiently broad and smooth, with commodious footpaths, and flanked by buildings of some pretensions, crossing the newly-designed streets, Via di Torino, di Firenze, &c. For nearly a twelvemonth, however, no progress has been perceptible, and the ingress and egress of the city will perhaps long continue to be as arduous and almost impracticable as it now is.

For the present Rome is still, as it was, the city of one street—the Corso; and even that is hardly available for the purposes of social life as it is now understood. The Corso is somewhat less than a mile in length, measuring from the Porta and Piazza del Popolo to the Piazza and Palazzo di Venezia, beyond which, through a very narrow lane, the Ripresa dei Barberi, lie steep and crooked ways up to the Capitol. Throughout the Corso the roadway allows barely space for three carriages, and the raised *trottoir* only passage for two persons; in some of the most central parts (as, for instance, opposite the Chigi Palace, and near the Piazza Colonna, which is the hub of modern Rome) only

for one person. The consequence is that at all times in the year, but especially in the season—November to April—and at all hours of the day, but especially in the afternoon and early evening, the crush is appalling, and progress comes to a stand-still for minutes at a time. Of course the street ought to be widened at least to twice its present size; but it is the centre both of all the business and all the fashion in Rome; it is lined all along with sumptuous palaces, and, independently of the private edifices which it would be vandalism to touch, there is a vast amount of other property which would have to be purchased at terrific prices. Something, as a matter of sheer necessity, must be attempted, and something may eventually be achieved, for the points in which the buildings on both sides are equally valuable are not many, and by gaining ground now on one side, now on the opposite, relief may be afforded to the choked traffic almost all along the line. Where the demolition and reconstruction of houses would cause too great an outlay, it may be found practicable to open lines of porticoes along the ground floors, so as to afford a safe and sheltered footpath to the people, leaving the whole roadway for vehicles. The works under immediate consideration chiefly aim at the improvement of the street from the corner of the Via Condotti to the opening of the Via Nazionale at Piazza Sciarra. But the reduction of the Corso to conditions which may render the

intercourse along it at all tolerable will be also the work of many years, and it will tax the resources of the Roman Municipality to the utmost.

The ambition of the Roman Municipality is, however, by no means to be measured by their actual resources. The Council have been discussing a *Piano Regolatore*, or "Ruling Plan of Metropolitan Improvements," which has been projected by a "Communal Board" and revised by an "Examining Commission," and of which the construction of the Via Nazionale and the widening of the Corso are only two, and by no means the most important, items. The object of the framers of this plan is not merely to improve and beautify, but also to enlarge, Rome. They have projected the construction of seven new quarters—the Terme, Castro Pretorio, Esquilino, Viminale, Celio, and Testaccio, with an altogether new town at the Prati di Castello, all of which, with the filling up of waste ground in the districts already inhabited, would, it is computed, supply accommodation for 150,000 of the expected immigrants.

All these new quarters would have to be joined together by convenient thoroughfares, to be carved out of the petty, noisome lanes and alleys which are now dignified with the names of streets and piazzas. Take, for instance, the new suburb which is to rise out of the Prati di Castello, and furnish new homes to 35,000 souls. Its area will be

between the Tiber and the skirts of Monte Mario; it will adjoin the old district of the Borgo or Città Leonina, all along the line between the Vatican and Castle Sant' Angelo, removing the old walls and fortifications which enclose the city on one side, and encompassing it with a new *Cinta Daziaria*, or fencing-wall for the *Octroi*. This most desirable addition to the city lies in convenient proximity to its most crowded and busy quarters, and it moreover offers the advantage, rare in these neighbourhoods, of a perfectly flat surface. But it is subject to inundations from the Tiber, and will only be fit for habitation when the newly projected embankment of the river, upon which the safety of so large a part of the city depends, is carried into effect. The Prati di Castello are now only accessible through the Ponte Sant' Angelo, leading to the Angelica Gate near the Vatican, but even access to the Sant' Angelo Bridge is only obtainable through extremely awkward and encumbered thoroughfares. To render the new quarter available, three new bridges are projected: one from the Piazza del Popolo, a second from Porto di Ripetta (where now a ferry-boat is plying, and provisionally a bridge of boats is projected), to which a new broad street will lead from the Corso at Via Condotti, and a third from another street, which will have to be cut open from Piazza Navona, along Via del Soldato, to the river bank at Monte Brianzo.

By means of these three new bridges, and the old one at Sant' Angelo, and the various outlets of all the streets of the Borgo, the new suburb will be easily incorporated with a large mass of the inhabited quarters, and its situation at the foot of Monte Mario, in sight of the Vatican and Castle Sant' Angelo, will render it one of the most eligible districts in the city. The bastions of the castle will be dismantled and levelled into a public promenade, leaving the magnificent Mole Adriana to stand isolated in the midst of the green.

It will take no little time and money to accomplish all this, and scarcely less patience and outlay will be required to lay bare and recover the ground on which the other new quarters are to rise. In every direction away from the flats of the Tiber, the engineer who wishes to open a thoroughfare has to toil up the stubborn slopes of some of the Seven Hills, while the mason who attempts to dig the foundations of new buildings comes unexpectedly upon the ruins of old ones, on those ancient or mediæval relics with which it is sacrilege to interfere. Modern progress finds the way barred against it at every step. The Eternal City seems doomed to perpetuate its gloom and discomfort to the end of time, and religion for the past, carried to the verge of absurdity, everywhere puzzles the innovating spirit and the enterprising ardour of the men who have to provide for the present.

Meanwhile, whether or not there may be in

Rome room enough for the new-comers,—or room may be made for them without new quarters, by simply filling up the ample spaces either vacant or soon to be vacated by the suppression of religious houses and the confiscation of convent gardens,—it is certain that life can hardly be carried on in the city without important modifications in the old lines of communication. The completion of the Via Nazionale and the widening of the Corso and of other main thoroughfares are among the really urgent wants of modern Rome, and it is matter of regret that the Municipal Corporation should have suffered four years to pass without any serious effort to promote, and, in many cases, without even the slightest attempt to commence, the indispensable work.

Foreign visitors accustomed to the ways of Papal Rome, coming here for a few months bent on the enjoyment of the wonders of art in the Vatican, or eager for the excitement of Christmas and Easter Church shows in St. Peter's or the Sixtine Chapel, little heeded an occasional obstruction of carriages on their way through Via Tordinona, and rather enjoyed the crush of the Masquerade and the Corsa dei Barberi between Via Condotti and Piazza Colonna. But the Italians are now in Rome with an eye to life's business. Smooth, open, and, above all things, safe ways are for them the foremost necessity. This swarming together of men and beasts on the same hard, thronged, and

slippery lava pavements might become the dingiest purlieus of Stamboul or Cairo; it might even have suited the convenience of what was once the "Holy City," but Rome is now the head of a stirring, aspiring nation. That room which was once sufficient for cardinals and princes is no longer adequate to the wants of a self-respecting people, who care for life and limb, and dislike to dodge every horse and carriage that comes in their way.

A vast amount of nonsense is spoken by foreign, and especially by English and American, visitors about the rapid disappearance of all the charms of "dear old Rome." There is, it seems, some abatement in the dirt and rags which made the place so "picturesque." Many of the houses have been whitewashed, and the streets are swept nearly, though not quite, clean, the "new broom" being at work from sunrise to sunset, and with a perseverance which, considering the dust raised, amounts to a positive affliction. Count Pianciani, the Syndic, is a very Peregrine Touchwood in his zeal for removing nuisances; the drains are up, socially at the most awkward, but hygienically at the safest, time in the year. There is a great lack of house room, and the din and confusion and discomfort are immense. It is everywhere much hurry and little good speed. Nothing is being done, and yet "the picturesque character of the old place is going—gone."

Some of these benevolent people are apt to cry

before they are hurt. Travellers wont for many years to make Rome their head-quarters for the winter have for these last four years discontinued their visits, and, having no experience of the change political events may have wrought, declare *à priori* that "Rome is no longer a place fit to live in, that the old city is hardly recognizable, and that in their rage for modern improvement the Italians will not fail to demolish and obliterate all the grandeur and the havoc of the past." They expect to see "factory chimneys on the Palatine, cotton warehouses along the Via Sacra, a Crystal Palace at the Colosseum—everything disfigured, desecrated, vulgarized."

Rome is a city of many masters, and the Italians find it difficult to establish here the same right of exclusive ownership they may freely claim over any other inch of ground in the Peninsula. The Catholic world, with its two hundred millions, makes itself at home in the Vatican, and the scarcely less numerous multitude of artists, scholars, and archæologists, seem inclined to take possession of museums and ruins, and intimate to the natives that, though the treasures of the Old World are theirs to see, they must hardly presume to touch them. But there is something rash and not unprejudiced in all these apprehensions. The strangers who actually come to see things with their own eyes conceive a better opinion of the new rulers of the city. They acknowledge that there is

room in Rome for everybody and everything; that as it is the Pope's fault if he does not feel comfortable in his eleven thousand Vatican chambers, so the lovers of art and antiquity have only themselves to blame if they do not enjoy their pleasures or pursue their studies with greater ease and to a greater extent than they ever did under Pontifical auspices.

There is space enough in Rome for the ancient and modern city, and the "Ruling Plan" above alluded to has been drawn up with the nicest attention to avoid any trespass upon the soil hallowed even by the faintest vestiges of the past. Of course, every inch of Rome does not belong to the Romans or to the Italians, nor has the whole area of the ancient city remained uninvaded by the modern population during the many centuries elapsing between Alaric and Pius IX. No human contrivance can bring back to life what has been irreparably lost, nor can churches and palaces always be pulled down to lay bare the foundations of baths and circuses upon the ruins of which those modern structures have risen. All that the Italians can do and mean to do is to prevent any extension of the mischief that Gothic and Papal barbarians have done time out of mind; and it must be confessed that they proceed in this matter with a zeal, a caution and scrupulousness carried almost—a fault on the right side—to the extremes of pedantry.

A commission has been instituted, and a large staff of artists, antiquaries, and assistants, together with an efficient body of porters and police, has been organized, to take possession of all artistic treasure trove, to preserve all architectural monuments worth preserving, and to map, draw, and photograph, on a certain scale, pieces of old walls and foundations of previous times, and such things as, possessing no inherent beauty in themselves, may have to be re-interred in modern constructions.

Even on lands which are already or will soon become private property, owing to the sale of monastic houses, conditions are imposed which will prevent any destruction of such traces of antiquity as the plough or the pickaxe may turn up. The absolute and unlimited right of private possession falls through in Italy where the interests of art step in. A Roman or Florentine prince is not quite free to sell his picture gallery as he would dispose of his wine or oil. The nation reserves its rights on the produce of national genius, and the same protection is extended to the remnants of antiquity. Wherever and whenever any trace of old wall, any fragment of sculpture, or any piece of ancient or mediæval handiwork comes to light, the owner on whose premises the discovery is made, the engineer or workman who has been instrumental in making it, and, in short, every person who comes to any knowledge of it, is bound under penalty to call the attention of the authorities appointed to inquire

into the subject. The owner of any lands supposed to cover ancient remains, and who may wish to dispose of them, is not allowed to proceed to sell them without offering these authorities the first refusal. Commissions of vigilance on public and private excavations are established in every *Rione*, or ward of the city, and the objects thus found and appropriated by the nation are instantly removed to proper repositories, especially to chambers destined for them in the Capitoline Museum.

A cursory visit to these apartments in the rear of the Hall of Conservators will fill an archæologist with as much wonder as delight. All that has been dug up at Pompeii cannot supply a more intimate insight into the privacy of ancient life than one could gain here by looking at keys, earthen lamps and inkstands, metallic pens, scales and weights, ivory knife handles, wooden combs and spoons, sewing implements, tools, ornaments and trinkets, the endless knick-knacks of the toilet and drawing-room, laid out with infinite and loving care, by the side of odds and ends of statues, bas-reliefs, sarcophagi, &c., either broken up for lime or disfigured by long interment, and brought back to something like their former shape and put together, like the pieces of a Chinese puzzle, by the unwearied pains of the reverential restorer.

This as to the mere fragments. But even greater attention is shown to the mass itself of the antique monuments and to the sites in which they lay.

People whose recollections of Rome date from the early days of the Pontificate of Pius IX. will hardly recognize the old ruins with which they were familiar in the extensive areas which have lately been thrown open for their inspection. The ideas that superficial beholders could conceive of the Forum, the Palatine, and the various imperial baths were necessarily either extremely cramped or excessively vague. It is only now, since the Italian Government has taken the work in hand, that old Rome may be said to rise from its grave of ages; only now that by a large outlay of money, and by excavations on the most liberal and intelligent plan, we are enabled to reach the real ground of the Forum, to compass its length and width, to follow the Via Sacra as it winds through it, to be fully impressed with the stateliness of the temples which adorned it, and the loftiness of the Palatine and the Capitol, the hills that hemmed it in and commanded it.

The merit of unburying the Palatine is originally due to the Emperor Napoleon III., who purchased the Orti Farnesiani, and laid bare the foundations of the palace of the Cæsars. But the interesting ground has now been bought back by the Italian Government, and the works begun by the French monarch have been pursued with an ardour and activity bearing the most splendid results. There can hardly be in Rome, or in any other city, a more charming lounge than that of these old

Farnese Gardens, combining all the beauties of a luxuriant vegetation and an extensive prospect of town and country diversified by the gigantic masses of ancient masonry, the scattered fragments of columns and statuary, the bold arches of outer halls, the mosaics and frescoes of inner chambers—all the magnificence, the luxury, the privacy of that long-decayed ancient life—that death in life and life in death—seen through the medium of an intensely clear Italian atmosphere, amid the plash of the fountains and the quaint costumes, the lively talk, the pleasing humours of the present generation.

The unbounded liberality with which natives and strangers are admitted to view these and other curiosities of Rome, which lie either within the domains of the Italian Government or of the Roman Municipality, for many hours at stated days, contrasts very advantageously with the sullen reluctance and wearisome restrictions with which the Pope admits visitors to the Vatican and Lateran Museums, only at unconscionably early or inconveniently late hours, and with the black mail levied at the doors under a variety of vexatious pretences.

With this exception it may be said that the treasures of art and antiquity which make Rome the City of the World are looked upon as neutral ground on which not only all nations, but also men of all parties, may meet and work together in perfect amity.

The Municipal Archæological Commission num-

bers among its members, on the one hand, men devoted to the new order of things, such as Pianciani, Rosa, Castellani, Vitelleschi, &c., and, on the other, the two Visconti, De Rossi, Vespignani, &c., who are among the most determined partisans of the Pope's temporal power. All these work together to a common end, and, as is the nature of all liberal pursuits, the mere fact of their being engaged in the same task can hardly fail to beget a more intimate appreciation of each other's merits, and tends to smooth down the asperities of political antipathy.

Enough has been said, I think, to prove that the Italians are fully aware of the sacredness of the deposit which the conquest of their capital has brought into their hands. They are earnestly bent on doing full justice to the past even in the midst of their anxiety to provide for the present, and as they look upon themselves as fully competent to acquit themselves of their task with their unaided resources, they are apt to take offence even at well-meant foreign interference.

It is by no means sure that they are not in these matters under the influence of a little *Italia farà-da-sè* conceit. There is greater boldness in the design than method and consistency in the execution of their undertakings. They are not only somewhat slow to accomplish, but often even to commence. Take as an instance the scheme of digging up the bed of the Tiber in quest of the

marbles, bronzes, and other treasures of which it is supposed to be the receptacle — settling accounts with the old river, or, as it was emphatically proclaimed, "liquidating the Tiber." The project was made known to the world by a loud flourish of trumpets more than four years ago, yet it has hitherto led to nothing besides the creation of an "Initiative Committee." It is true that the Committee made their own enterprise subordinate to another work of an equally colossal description, the embankment, or, as it is styled, "*Sistemazione*" of the river,— a work which the Municipality of the city, aided by the Government, took upon itself soon after the inundations of October, 1870, but which is year after year referred to a Giunta, or Committee, *more Italico*, for more mature considerations and more lengthy reports, but always with the same barrenness of results. It would have seemed natural that something might at least be attempted by disengaging the current from the broken arches of old bridges and other obstructions, but the fact is that what is merely easy, obvious and unexpensive does not recommend itself to the attention of the magnificent gentlemen who are giving their thoughts to Roman improvements.

To "embrace too much and clasp nothing" *(abbracciar troppo e nulla stringere)* is, I am afraid, in spite of the wise proverb, a rather strong Italian instinct.

The plan of a grand gallery, or arcade in the

Parisian or Milanese fashion, opening on Piazza Colonna; that of a grand viaduct connecting the Pincio with the Villa Borghese, making of the two pleasure grounds one vast promenade; and others of the same nature, would in all probability never go beyond the stage of mere projects, were even the Municipality as rich as it is poor, and as free from other engagements as it is overwhelmed and crushed by them.

Perhaps real earnestness and activity are not among the prominent features of the Italian character. There are in this country but few Utopians and fanatics; few of those "men of one idea" who, after all, accomplish the great things of this world.

Everybody in Rome is calling out for a Haussmann. But were there even such a *rara avis* in the country, it is questionable whether he would be allowed to have his own way. Italy will do everything by herself—in her own time, and after her own slow and sure, careless and slovenly manner. "Rome was not built in a day."

CHAPTER V.

THE ROMAN SEASON.

Italy and her Foreign Visitors—The Strangers' Rome—The Foreign Season in Rome—Roman Climate—The Health of Rome—Cholera—Cholera Panic—Fumigations—Roman Mortality—The Campagna—Society in Rome—The Roman Princes.

THE Italians are not great hands at statistics, or else they could probably prove that, on the whole, their country attracts more travellers in quest of pleasure, and with them more money, than any other region under the sun. And it is most assuredly the sun that causes it, the intense purity of the sky, the many months' genial temperature, the fruitful soil, and the influence exercised on men's minds by all these combined advantages for many centuries. Men and women go to Paris to shop, they go to the North to fish, to Nice to gamble, to Egypt to stave off consumption, but they come to Italy to idle; and of the wanderers who leave their country to get rid of the balance at their bankers', the idlers are by far the greatest number. In Italy also nothing is easier than to dignify idleness. Here in Rome, for instance, the mere "doing" of the place is very hard work. There

are studios and ruins to see and lectures to attend, balls and levées, carnivals and church-festivities, and the meets of the hounds in the Campagna, a King to be bowed to, and a Pope to be knelt to. We are told that about 20,000 strangers spend three months in this city during a fair average season. How much money these may have to spend besides their time it might not be easy to compute; but it is by no means difficult to see how they do spend it. It is chiefly on them that Roman industry and trade subsist, and in that respect it is as yet doubtful whether the promotion of Rome to the rank of Italian capital, and the presence of two Houses of Parliament, two Courts, and two diplomatic bodies, will eventually do more good or more harm to the city.

Besides these thousands of gold-feathered birds of passage, Italy also secures many of her foreign visitors as fixtures, and most of these are not, as in other countries, mere men of business, but remain for many years, and sometimes for their lives, the same idlers they were when they first settled—the same inquisitive, somewhat fussy, but, on the whole, genial and benevolent idlers. The intercourse between the Italians and these strangers, whether fleeting or permanent, is, as a rule, not very intimate or cordial; still some points of contact as well as of repulsion between them do exist (were it only community or antagonism of religious creed), and from such intercourse springs

occasional inter-marriage (usually the exchange of a high-sounding Southern title for a comfortable Northern dowry). Wherever an international *ménage* of this kind is established, there a hybrid social circle frequently congregates, and there common interests, a mutual understanding, and a desire to do good develope themselves, all to the profit of the country which so admirably lends itself to such combinations. Happy is the city in Italy which boasts of a foreign or a mixed circle within its walls. Florence was, as usual, gay this last winter; but at the head of balls, concerts, and other entertainments announced, we simply read the names of English, German, Russian, and American grandees, and when we heard that Roman householders expected to let their balconies for the Carnival at the rate of 60*l*., we were sure that they relied on the extravagance of the alien inmates of the hotels. The Italians have the reputation of being no dinner givers; but dinners, and very good ones, are eaten in Italy nevertheless, and the natives are often to be seen sitting down to them, and it is perfectly immaterial to them that they appear as guests where they ought to do duty as hosts.

But it is not solely in matters of hospitality that Italy is benefited by the presence of her foreign visitors, and especially of the foreign settlers on her soil. There is an Englishman on Lake Maggiore who has invested a million of lire in the mere

building of a villa, and one-fourth of that sum in the embellishment of a chapel; there is another Englishman who has raised the ruins of an old castle near Florence into a superb mediæval structure; he has filled it with treasures of art and antiquity, and has opened it to the public as a rural museum. There is a third Englishman at Perugia—but, indeed, where is there an eligible spot in the Peninsula where a Briton or other Northern man has not contrived to make himself at home, striving to be of use to the people among whom he settled, yet seldom wishing, often scorning, and never actually managing to become one of them?

Most of the money foreign thrift earns in Italy is turned to Italy's advantage, and a good deal also of the money earned in other countries. Italy is a beauty that suitors from all parts of the world delight in petting, endowing, adorning, and of course spoiling. Hardly a charitable institution or a beneficent scheme is ever got up for which foreign subscriptions are not instantly forthcoming. Funds for the sufferers by an eruption of Vesuvius, funds for the victims of an inundation of the Po, funds for nuns driven from their convents, funds for organ-boys retired or rescued from their vagrant trade; no one need be at a loss for funds wanted for any purpose wherever Italy or anything Italian is concerned. Other countries may have claims to people's sympathy, but Italy can have everything

without asking, and need not even be at the trouble of being thankful.

Other nations may be scolded or shamed into mending their ways. The Italians are simply bribed into it. It was English humanity, or, as some people would have it, English "fussiness, mawkishness, and squeamishness," that organized the first societies for the protection of animals in Turin, Florence, and Palermo; and the same impulse, as I have hinted, has been more lately at work towards the achievement of the same object in Rome, where, indeed, the attempt was at first viewed by a certain party with jealousy and suspicion as something outlandish and even heretical, the priests contending that it was meant as a slander upon their late Government, and that "domestic animals were nowhere treated with greater care, tenderness and humanity than they used to be in the Holy City."

The same priestly hostility, generally from the same party, arises against the many schemes of beneficence, the schools, homes, kindergärten, and asylums of every description opened by charitable strangers in Rome, in Naples, and other cities of Italy, for the entire and exclusive advantage of destitute Italians. The people here show little surprise at the many things these good Samaritans are contriving for their benefit, and seem to take it as their due, even when they are most earnest in the expression of their gratitude; for both Clericals

and Liberals look upon this philanthropy as a cloak to religious propagandism, and favour or oppose it according to their own bias to or against Protestantism and freedom of conscience. In many instances, however, both the Government and private men of distinction, and especially the King and the tender-hearted Princess Margaret, come to the aid of these well-meaning strangers, feeling how much more Italy owes to them than their actual bounties may amount to, as they bring their energy and experience, their spirit of enterprise and association, but above all things their firmness of purpose, to bear on the no less intelligent, but more plastic, inert, and unpractical nature of this Southern people.

Above all things, one might ask, what without these Northerners would become of the Roman season? It began this year under almost hopelessly unfavourable auspices, for even commercial distress and financial panic in New York have their *contre-coup* on the custom of Roman hotels and boarding-houses, and we had here a great *skedaddle* among the Yankees, who are always the earliest arrivals, and who were in this instance spirited away by the tidings of some "awful *smash* in Wall Street." Then came the cholera panic, and the determination of the Swiss innkeepers to make the best of it for themselves at the expense of their North Italian brethren, and the no less stubborn resolution of these latter to recoup themselves at the costs of

their Roman *confrères*. To mention Rome and any epidemic disease in the same breath is to give a dog a bad name; for, strange to say, with respect to the health of this place the most absurdly contradictory opinions prevail. Among the many who visit the city to enjoy life, there are some who simply come here to escape death. I could name ladies in delicate health, who, after a long experience of all European and other climates, have come to the conclusion that from November to May the only vital spot for them is the Piazza di Spagna. It may be mere delusion on their part, but even faith alone has saving powers, and argument would make little impression where neither home associations nor great worldly interests have power to outweigh the bare hope of prolonging dear life.

After all, so long as life endures, it has inexpressible charm in a Roman winter. We had a few cold days in Rome this last season. The keen *tramontana* swept every speck of cloud from the firmament, and the water had a sufficient chill in the morning to make our morning bath a luxury; still day after day, even in January, many of us never dreamt of having a fire lighted, and the shawls and cloaks with which we had provided ourselves for many an afternoon lounge on the Palatine hung a useless encumbrance on our arms. And nevertheless, with all its mild, balmy climate, Rome, as we all know, has a somewhat sinister

reputation, and there are perhaps as many doctors anxious to warn their patients to avoid it as there are others ready to recommend it.

The Romans themselves look on their atmosphere as the Spaniards on their cloak, "equally good for heat and cold," but migratory birds, who deem it necessary to flit before the dog-days, are not without difficulty coaxed back till long after the fall of the leaf. French, English, Belgian, and German papers are often filled with alarming accounts respecting the insalubrity of Rome, and the *Lancet* had even no hesitation in characterizing the city as the most unhealthy of human abodes. The outcry on this subject rises now and then so high that the Italians rather absurdly attribute it to political motives, and fancy they can see in this general attempt to cry down their new capital—which is at the utmost only a plot of inn-keepers and watering-place doctors—the result of a clerical intrigue, intended to scare travellers from that residence of the Pope which, in the conceit of the Ultramontanes, has now become his dungeon. There can be no doubt, however, that something wholesome in the air of these Seven Hills there must be, and we might find a fresh proof of it in the cholera, about which an alarm arose at the beginning of last November, for so great was the suddenness of the onslaught and of the total disappearance of the scourge, as to leave the people doubtful as to the nature of the disease with which

they had been visited; while in Venice, in Naples, and in other localities throughout Italy, the complaint, which broke out in milder weather, seemed to draw fresh intensity from the cooling of the season.

But if we suffered little in Rome from the real calamities of a pestilence, we had rather more than our share of its troubles and vexations. There is no people in the world so strongly attached to life as the Italians; consequently none whose terror of infection is more easily awakened. There are recent instances on record in which panic seized the whole population of certain localities, and so scattered the officials of every kind and degree in various directions as to leave the community almost entirely without government; and I shall never forget with what rigour the indignant Cavour was wont to punish so cowardly a dereliction of duty by the summary dismissal of whole batches of recreant placemen. Those measures of salutary rigour, and the example of the King and army, had a bracing effect on Italian nerves at every successive visit of the epidemic, and now hardly any person—man, woman, or child—is any longer scared away by what was for so long a time an awful bugbear.

But if the Italians have plucked up a spirit, and "never mind" the cholera, they talk an intolerable deal about it, and this is just as bad. They take thought how they may best check the progress of the evil or mitigate its severity; they resort to a

variety of measures, of which some can certainly do no harm and some only cause inconvenience, but all of which have the effect of raising the ghost they are meant to lay, and ministering to the fears they are intended to dispel.

Anything more stolid than the conduct of the Board of Health in Rome at this juncture it would be impossible to imagine. They deemed it expedient to provide for the public safety by fumigating passengers and their luggage on their arrival. But they did this only at the railway station at Piazza di Termini; no hindrance was ever offered to travellers entering at any of the city gates, whether they came by coach from great distances, or whether they had merely stopped at the nearest station, at Albano or Monte Rotondo, and thence smuggled themselves into Rome, thus escaping the nuisance awaiting them at Piazza di Termini. Even at the station the smoking was only applied to the persons of the passengers and to their portmanteaus and travelling bags; no attention was paid to hats or band-boxes, and, what is more, none whatever to the huge bundles of cloaks, rugs, wrappers, and blankets with which every wayfarer is now-a-days encumbered, and in the folds of which, if anywhere, the subtle poison of an epidemic might be expected to lurk. Often also—and this was the acme of stupidity—travellers whose eight or ten trunks were arrayed in a long line on the Custom-house counter were

made to open, not the whole, that all their linen and clothes should receive the benefit of the disinfecting fluid such as it might be, but only one bag or case at the sanitary official's choice and pleasure, as if the cholera were merely a contraband article, for which it might be too troublesome to search the whole equipage, but which might turn out at haphazard, if the official hit on the offending article!

I have dwelt at full length on the particulars of these senseless proceedings on account of the incalculable mischief they wrought, without the slightest particle of corresponding good. They did not, of course, prevent the invasion of the cholera, though it only came like a lion in the morning to leave us again like a lamb in the evening, and as if its object had been merely to establish its right of denizenship in the city; but the gratuitous vexations to which it was understood that travellers were exposed at the Roman station kept away many for whom the cholera itself would have had no terrors. I travelled from Naples with a newly-married couple who had not been told of the ordeal which awaited them at their journey's end, and who, learning it now from their fellow-passengers, and conceiving Heaven knows what idea of its nature, could not be induced to proceed any further than Capua, the lady, in hysterics, refusing to be comforted by the offer of her chivalrous husband that she should not be

subjected to the smoking till the experiment had been made *in corpore vili*, *i.e.* on himself, and was proved to be completely harmless.

The health of Rome, which in winter, at least, was a fact universally acknowledged, even when the Papal Government allowed the city to be a sink of all uncleanliness, is not likely to have diminished now under a rule which is sweeping and draining its streets, whitewashing its houses, and bringing fresh air into its foulest quarters. The statistics upon which foreign journals based their unfriendly judgment erred in this, that they referred to one month or quarter the figures representing a whole year's mortality; that they relied too blindly on the undeniable fact that in Rome the deaths exceed the births by one-fifth, never considering that this in a great measure depends on the circumstance that the male population of Rome outnumber the female by 34,000 souls (the whole population being 247,000), the difference between the two sexes owing entirely to the recent introduction of workmen and Government officials without families, a formidable addition to the 7,000 or 8,000 monks and nuns bound to vows of celibacy and seclusion. Allowance being made for these anomalies, the Roman doctors contend that the proportion between the births and deaths will be found the same in Rome as in other localities, and that the prevalence of such diseases as small-pox and diphtheria is less considerable here than elsewhere. They reckon

that the numbers of foreign visitors of different nationalities coming to Rome during the season average between 16,000 and 20,000, and the rate of death among them is only 1·3 per 1,000. And taking the average between those travellers who merely spend here two weeks, and those who prolong their stay for six months, they think they may assign two months for the ordinary time of residence, and multiplying that by six, the mortality of the strangers in Rome for the whole year would be 7·8, a mortality greatly inferior to that of London or Brussels, where the rate is lowest, and where it is about 21 per 1,000.

Much stress need not be laid on these calculations; but these professional men, even if they could not prove that Rome should be held as "the healthiest spot in the world," may be justified in their refutation of the assertions of those who charge it with being "the most unhealthy." And they refer to the opinion entertained about this favoured locality by the ancients, who drew a distinction between the metropolis itself and its immediate neighbourhood, saying of the founder of Rome, in the words of Cicero, *locumque delegit in regione pestilentiali salubrem*, while Livy, in nearly the same words, extolled the *saluberrimos colles in pestilenti atque arido circa urbem loco.*

Meanwhile the very fact that the healthiness of Rome was always described as circumscribed within the "Seven Hills," admitting the pestilential nature of the surrounding region; the cruel certainty that

only the closest, narrowest and most noisome quarters of the city are considered "safe" throughout the year, while all round the walls, in such lovely spots as the Villa Borghese or Villa Doria Pamphili, or even within the walls, on the Pincio, at the French Academy, in the Villa Medici, and even in the exposed premises near Piazza di Spagna and Piazza del Popolo, death lurks for six months in the year—are all matters to suggest serious thoughts to those whom necessity rather than choice induced to establish the centre of Italian life in a city which as a Papal residence had been for centuries dying by inches. As to the "pestilential nature" of the Roman Campagna in ancient and modern times, there can be no doubt; and it is only very uncertain whether either the present or any future Italian generation will have the energy by which their Roman forefathers seem to have contrived to gather millions round the isolated spot which Romulus opened as an asylum for a handful of runaway malefactors. The question of the drainage of the Campagna has hardly advanced one step since the Italian Government first took it in hand. Commissions of inquiry have been appointed; reports have been written, read, and ordered to be printed; but the study of the technical difficulties is a mere nothing compared with the variety of political and economical considerations for which the necessary expropriation of the present landowners opens a wide field. There is much to be done, and in the

alleged impossibility of knowing what to do first, the Italians may, according to their custom, end by doing nothing at all. Next to nothing, at all events, has been done about planting the Eucalyptus, the blessed gum-tree which was to absorb the malaria and its fever throughout Italy. The faith of the Roman people in its virtues, at no time very great, seems daily to wax fainter.

With all these drawbacks, however, Rome must have its season. It begins now somewhat later in the year than it did when the Pope opened his ecclesiastical festivities by his High Mass at San Carlo al Corso. In the early part of October the city still bears that jaded, inanimate look which the long continuance of heat and drought casts upon it. The Romans have by this time exhausted all their stock of fresh air, and cannot hope to breathe till the autumn rains set in; and foreign tourists Romeward bound are lingering on their way. The movements of European travellers are guided by those of their representatives; and foreign diplomatists, at least those accredited to the Court of the King of Italy, are apt to measure the length of the Roman season by the duration of the Parliamentary session, which hardly ever opens before the middle of November and ends in June. The life that Parliament brings to Rome is limited to the Hotel della Minerva, and a few dingy lodging-houses in the purlieus of Monte Citorio, not in the least affecting the quarters about Via Sistina or Via Condotti; for,

as we have seen, only very few of the *patres patriæ* of the Italian Chambers ever dream of bringing their families to Rome, thinking that this place is too much the "City of the Soul" to be a "home for the body," complaining that *a Roma ci si sta male*, and quarrelling with the city as unsuited to the exigencies of a practical human habitation—a complaint which, looking merely at its material accommodation, is not altogether unreasonable.

Little, however, as Italian Rome offers in the way of public diversions at this early stage of the season, its liveliness far exceeds whatever it could boast on that score in the good old Papal times. Society here is not particularly dull, though it is, and will, perhaps, long be, necessarily divided against itself. The Quirinal is not much of a Court, because the King is never present when he is by any possibility allowed to be absent, and the Diplomacy, as we know, is so decidedly at loggerheads, that the company which assemble at the French Minister's house on one side of the street can have no connexion with the party entertained at the French Ambassador's over the way. Guelphs and Ghibelines, Pope's men and King's men, though belonging to the same country and people and subject to the same state, have no common ground to meet unless it be the drive round the Pincio. Even for the burial of the dead, as we shall have occasion to see, joint action and good understanding are impracticable. The Princess Margaret

herself, with all the glamour that clings about her person, fails in her attempts at conciliation and the fusion of parties. The princely families seldom throw open their houses. They do not keep up much social intercourse with one another, but there is none whatever between them and the *Buzzurri*, or Piedmontese and other Italian intruders, or with the Romans who have made common cause with these latter. The position of these poor old Roman nobles, who thus choose to sulk in their palaces and to eclipse themselves in a society of which they could and ought to be the highest ornaments, is sufficiently singular, and one wonders how long it will continue on its present footing. There is nothing more puny than their hostility to the new order of things, nothing more idle than any hope on their part to put an end to it by their own exertions. But setting aside the origin, connexions and dependencies of many of these families, by which their greatness is identified with priestly ascendancy, it must be confessed that the immediate, all-sweeping application to Rome and her territory of the Italian civil laws—and especially of those abolishing *Maggioraschi* or entails and other privileges of primogeniture, and compelling a division of a man's property among his children—had much in them to wound the pride as well as the interest of these half-feudal aristocrats, to say nothing of the decrees of expropriation for objects of public utility with which their mansions in

town and their parks in the country are threatened.

Evil days are these in which it has befallen these poor princes to live. Yet it is difficult to see whom else they have to blame if not themselves, if they allowed a fate which they should long have foreseen, and endeavoured to avert, to overtake them. Had there been understanding, manliness and strength of will among them, nothing would have prevented their being a power, a leading and controlling power, in the old Papal state. And nothing could prevent their now joining the other Italian nobility, and becoming a power in that Italian kingdom, which is, perhaps, less of a democracy than is generally imagined.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROMAN CARNIVAL.

Carnival Associations—Pasquino I. and II.—A Carnival Pageantry—Decline of Carnival—Carnival by Order—Trade and Carnival—Carnival and Pauperism—Carnival a Failure—All Play and No Work—Old and New Carnival—Fun in Bad Taste—Carnival Parties—A Children's Ball.

THE spirit of Carnival is beginning to breathe over Italy. The people are everywhere preparing to obey that law of necesssity which "bids them amuse themselves"; but a question arises in the emancipated country with which it used little to be troubled in days of servitude, and that is, "At whose expense are the people to have their enjoyment?" The idea is slowly gaining ground that public money should not be spent for private purposes, and that those who wish for pleasure should pay for it. The rule, it is true, is not strictly adhered to with respect to the theatre, for the Apollo at Rome, the San Carlo at Naples, and others, still receive several hundred thousand lire as a yearly subvention. But the drama, the opera, and perhaps even the ballet, are, we are told, matters involving great social as well as artistic

interests, and in many cases there are vested rights, established customs, and positive obligations, not to be set lightly aside. But Carnival stands on no such footing. Its frolics in olden times used to be decreed or forbidden at the commencement of each season, and they would now be discontinued unless there were some body specially interested in promoting and ordaining them.

The State and the Municipality have no longer anything to say to the Carnival; it may open and close when it pleases; it may take any turn that it fancies; it need expect no let or hindrance, but it must hope for no aid or favour. In the absence of public patronage it should rely on private association. So it is in theory, and to some extent even in practice. There is in almost every town a Società del Carnevale, usually placed under the auspices of some local mask—Gianduia in Turin, Meneghino in Milan, Stenterello in Florence, and Pasquino in Rome—devising the Saturnalian sports, and collecting funds for them. The Società del Pasquino was astir here at an early time; yet Rome had this year a narrow escape of going altogether without her Carnival, and it required all the help of gods and men to save her from so dire a disappointment. Pasquino had hit on a grand scheme of a rehearsal of ancient Imperial games, pomps, and pageantries in the Colosseum. But a loud outcry arose, and not merely on the part of the Ultramontanes or even of the liberal

Catholics, in condemnation of the projected desecration of the magnificent ruin, which was made hallowed ground by the Papal Government in honour of the early Christian martyrs with whose blood the arena of the great circus was so often flooded, and which with its huge cross in the centre, and with the stations of the Via Crucis ranged at intervals along the lowest steps of the Amphitheatre, was till lately used for the performance of pious ceremonies, and ranked as one of the three hundred and sixty-five churches in Rome.

The insane scheme had to be given up; and Pasquino, as King of the Revels, abdicated his throne in a huff, and there were for a day or two no prospects whatever of a Carnival. At this point, however, the Syndic and the Municipal Council, who, in obedience to the sober and thrifty spirit of the age, had come to the magnanimous resolution that if their townsfolk wished to dance they should themselves pay the fiddle, relented in sore alarm and swerved from their heroic purpose; and pocketing their rigid notions of public morality and political economy, they determined that the Romans should amuse themselves whether they chose to pay for it or not. They therefore suggested that a successor to the vacant throne should be elected in the person of King Pasquino II., and assigned to him a civil list of 60,000 lire. With these sinews of war, eked out by private subscriptions, his frolicsome majesty went to work,

and on Saturday, the 7th of February, the Corso saw the inauguration of the revels of the season.

At two o'clock P.M., King Pasquino was at the Piazza del Popolo awaiting Saturn and his retinue, who were expected to alight from Olympus, or some other place, at Ponte Molle, and to drive with him in state through the gate. At three the gods made their appearance, when, after cordial greetings, the host and guests formed into a stately procession on the Piazza, and set out on their long march along the Corso.

First came Saturn, with his white-robed, long-bearded high-priests and his numerous household, drawn in a heavy, clumsy, but lofty car by two yokes of pearl-coloured oxen, robed in crimson trappings, with tassels at their horns, and small metallic mirrors on their frontal bones, and bells hanging from their necks; the god, a jolly old gentleman in a scarlet mantle, with the twelve signs of the zodiac compassing him round like a glory, with his conventional hour-glass and scythe, and the traditional acorns upon which Italy fattened in the good old days before bread was invented.

Next came Ceres and Bacchus, with their mixed retinue of buxom nymphs and lusty satyrs, all in one great car, also drawn by oxen, the car shaking and swaying heavily, and gods and mortals bobbing their heads helplessly as the huge, springless conveyance rolled over the sharp lava diamonds of the Roman pavement.

On the third car, to which horses were harnessed, stood a pasteboard elephant, and on his back Pasquino, the well-known armless torso of the Braschi Palace, attended by the equally famous Baboon, or *Babuino*, from which the street in which the English delight takes its name. There was a fourth car, with a Roman Emperor and a horde of "liberated slaves," a medley of Eastern monarchs and savages, Chinese, Japanese, Polynesians, and other men with tails, strangely jumbled together without regard to chronology or geography, a riddle of which the meaning was Greek to me as to many of the spectators, but which, I suppose, may have been meant as an illustration of the Darwinian theory.

Alternately with these triumphal cars were humbler vehicles with bands of musicians in fancy costumes. The tunes from the bands, and an occasional boom of the cannon, made up for the somewhat feeble applause with which the show was greeted, for the enthusiasm of the crowd was not great nor the fun genuine. The cars, though not tasteless in design, were tawdry in execution, and although no fault could be found with the horned cattle, the teams of horses consisted of as sorry a set of jades as it was possible to muster even in Rome. Never was there a better illustration of the maxim, that a Carnival must be born, not made. The crowd on the pavement was dense, but the balconies and shop windows, which had been gaily and picturesquely decked out for hire with many coloured

drapery, were for the most part untenanted. Hardly any private carriages, and only a few *botti*, or one-horse flys, were to be seen; and the masks who paraded the streets on foot were of the shabbiest and most stupid description.

The truth is that the Italian people have somewhat cooled in their ardour for the Saturnalia of their forefathers, and they would gladly stay at home and mind their business if their well-wishers would only let them. Provide *panem et circenses*, or even the "games" without the "bread," and they will, of course, not fail to take their share of your gifts in any country or climate; but, if left to spontaneous instincts, it is very questionable whether the Italians, and especially the Romans, a people of bilious temperament, would exhibit so much fondness for those sports for which they are as often ridiculed as admired and envied by their neighbours. At all events, it is not towards abstruse allegory or tinsel and spangle pageantry that their spirit of fun would incline.

Under despotic rule, Carnival, like everything else, had become a political institution,—the Government deemed it good policy to wean the people from sober, manly thought by the encouragement of its half-childish pastimes, and the patriots endeavoured to keep the people aloof from its tomfooleries by way of a sullen protest against tyrannic seduction, and well knowing that such an abstention on the part of the multitude had in it something as alarming

as the humour of a dog eschewing water, or of any other domestic animal off its feed. The expectation always was that with priestly and princely rule Carnival should come to an end; but priests and princes have lost their influence; Italy is "one and indivisible," and Carnival is still the order of the day, the argument in its favour being that it would never be expedient to suffer it to be said that freedom and independence have damped the spirits of the people, and that care for the earnest present unfits them for such enjoyments as the genial past procured them.

But it is urged, moreover, that Carnival is a promoter of luxury, and luxury the main stimulus to trade and industry; and that an impulse should be given to everything which may induce the rich to part with their wealth, and "to cause their five-franc pieces to roll among the poor."

Thereon hangs a whole chain of very questionable reasoning.

Carnival in Italy has become a speculation, and its object is not so much to minister to the idle propensities of the population as to benefit certain classes of society at the expense of certain others. Carnival associations first sprang up among shopkeepers, though persons of higher rank soon consented to place themselves at the head of the movement. To the manufacturers of *coriandoli*, or chalk-pellets, to the tailors and milliners, busy with the preparation of fancy costumes and

masquerading dresses, to livery-men, hackney-coachmen, wax-chandlers who deal in *moccoletti*, or tapers for the impromptu illumination, for cooks, pastry-cooks, wine-merchants, and the whole tribe, Carnival is a happy harvest-time, and the "roaring" trade which they drive stimulates the activity of all other business. But the golden shower occasioned by the demand for Carnival "properties" does not go deep into the popular strata, and there is something in the very employment of Carnival operatives, in the nature of their productions, and in the morbid taste for dissipation which their pursuit engenders, tending to spread and aggravate the distress which the fillip given to these sorry gaieties is meant to relieve. Nothing is more common in Rome and throughout Italy than to hear of the heads of families either struggling against difficulties, or even bordering on sheer destitution, and yet foolish enough to pawn their very beds and their children's cradles for the hire of a domino to be displayed either in the by-streets of the Borgo or Monti, or at the balls in some of the dingy minor theatres.

The whole social organization of old Italy, with its interminable summer and winter holidays, and the example of the mendicant orders living on alms solicited on religious grounds, thus hallowing beggary, seemed only intended to pauperize the whole nation, and give it those unthrifty, improvident habits which blunted all sense of self-respect

and decency among the lower orders, making them wallow in sloth and dirt as if in their own element, and flout their rags in the light of day as if entitled to the admiration rather than to the compassion of the passers-by.

If I have indulged in rather too long and severe a sermon, I hope the reader will give me credit for not having acted without great provocation. The 9th of November, as many know to their cost, is apt to interfere not a little with the traffic of the London thoroughfares. But what would the good people of Cockayne say if they had to put up with eleven—I say eleven—successive days of Lord Mayor's Show? This is, however, the hardship that Carnival here inflicts upon us, and with this aggravation of misery, that while in the city of London you are only shut out from the line of Fleet Street and the Strand, and circulation is still possible along Holborn or the Thames Embankment, we are excluded from the only real street of Rome, the Corso,—a street crossing the town from end to end, and, as I have repeatedly stated, inadequate to the movement of the crowded population even in ordinary times.

It would be hard to submit to this inconvenience even if we were told that the interests of the few must give way to the wishes of the many; but we are, on the contrary, universally assured, and inwardly convinced, that the business of the majority is sacrificed hardly as much to the

pleasure as to the sordid speculation of a selfish minority; that without the contributions, however paltry, of the inconsistent Municipality, and the efforts, however pitiful, of the shop-keepers, the Roman Carnival would either altogether die out, or dwindle to at least tolerable proportions, for little fault would be found with it if it were reduced to one, two, or, at the very utmost, three days.

The Romans are not more eager to amuse themselves than other people, and, indeed, the endless pains taken to minister to their enjoyment prove how little they are really in the humour for it. They, like the rest of the Italians, have been for centuries schooled and forcibly trained to idleness, and they should now be lovingly educated to sober industry.

From other cities of the Peninsula, and especially from Florence and Naples, the most gloomy tidings reach us of the dreariness of the "merry season," and at Milan, where the Carnival association failed to scrape together 10,000 lire, there are serious thoughts of waiving the privilege granted of old to the city by St. Ambrose, its Archbishop, and doing away with that *Carnevalone* which began after Ash Wednesday, and for the sins of which the early Lenten penances could, of course, make no amends.

It may be natural to grieve at this decline among the Italians of that taste for the Carnival which

was one of their most striking characteristics, and, for my part, so long as it be spontaneous and kept within rational limits, I would raise no objection to it. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and a little hearty mirth is as good and necessary a rest to our working faculties as sound sleep. But no good can come of any attempt at reviving what is out of date. Without the few thousand English and other strangers, of late chiefly Americans, assembling at Rome at this season, Carnival would be dead and buried; and even all the gold of foreign visitors is obviously insufficient to prolong its agony. Were the Italians left to themselves they would probably lose all their titles to that appellation of "Carnival Nation" with which they have so long been taunted.

There has hardly been a show, a *Corso di Gala*, or drive in state,—hardly a fancy fair or charity lottery, donkey race or ride on velocipedes (these last poor substitutes for the *Corsa dei Barberi*, or race of loose horses without riders, which the Municipal Council have providentially made up their mind to forbid as dangerous to the by-standers' life or limb)—hardly any festivity devised in Pasquino's programme that has not, on the whole, turned out a decided failure; and if the people have at all amused themselves, it has only been when and where entertainment has not been provided—where the orders of the would-be masters of the revels, with respect to the days set

apart for particular purposes, have been disregarded, and anything like plan and rule departed from, in spite of the police instructed to keep a peace which no one dreamt of disturbing.

The Romans, and the strangers who out-do the Romans for the occasion, betook themselves to the only amusements which they really cared for, the fight with the *Coriandoli*, and the lighting up and blowing out of *Moccoletti*. With respect to the *Moccoletti*, the fun has been in so far spoilt by the Carnival society, that, fearing lest the tapers contributed by the revellers might make too poor a muster and leave the Corso in darkness, they ventured on a grand display of glaring gas-lamps, and even of Bengal lights, by which the poor farthing candles of the merry-makers were soon utterly out-blazed, and the spectacle lost all that quaint and original character with which men as well as children were formerly delighted. So important it is that rulers should understand that it is as foolish to bid men enjoy themselves as it is wise to let them do it, and do it in their own way.

The chief result of keeping the people idle by nursing, pampering, and bolstering up a decrepit institution has been obtained. From the 7th to the 17th of February (Sundays and Fridays not excepted) the Romans have cut shop and workshop, and the most crowded streets have been those leading to the *Monte di Pietà*, or Government Pawnbroker, where property pledged for a day's folly will, perhaps, lie

a long time, scarcely to be redeemed by a year's incessant soberness. We all know how little the better the English workmen are for their dissipations prolonged throughout Whitsun week, and we are also aware, that in England a few national holidays had to be instituted by order. But, even then, bank clerks and others have only been allowed leisure and freedom for a recreation; no temptations have been officially thrown in their way by pageantries supplied at the public expense, or mummeries got up by subscription. But here in Rome we have had nearly a fortnight's incessant festivities, and these come close upon the rejoicings of Christmas and the *Befana* of Twelfth Night; and are followed by Saints' days, King's days, Pope's days, and every description of ecclesiastical and political anniversaries, allowing at least two Sundays for every week in the year, an endless array of festivities, to which yet one more has been added by a Bill just voted in Parliament, at the suggestion of a Neapolitan deputy, the Duca di San Donato, bidding New Year's Day to be "kept idle" as a State Holiday.

The priests are inexpressibly delighted with the visible miscarriage of this endeavour to keep alive the old jollity, and sneer at the "official Carnival of Rome, made with the money of the Municipality, because otherwise there would be no Carnival at all." They contrast it with the success which attended their own contrivance in the good old times, when the same Old Man encouraged as a King in the

Corso those saturnalia which he anathematized as a Pope in the churches. They do not see in this falling off of a silly old practice, which so long flourished under their influence, the evidence of a higher sense of dignity, and of more earnest yearnings among the people so lately withdrawn from their sway. If the Romans are becoming more fastidious in their pleasures, if all the efforts of their deluded new rulers fail to do more than to induce them to saunter, listless and weary, about their streets, may it not be that they begin to perceive that a people may do something better than wear pasteboard faces or pelt one another with chalk dust?

Unable to make political capital of the ill success of the Carnival, and to prove that the chosen people of Rome are hankering after the flesh-pots of their days of bondage, the priests are inveighing against the impiety which attempts to enliven the "harmless old pleasantries" by "ribaldry and sacrilege." Masquerades have been made this year to mimic a squadron of Papal Dragoons on hobby-horses, and to caricature the "Army of Liberation,"—that of the French Legitimists with the white flag and the Pontifical Zouaves at their head, an army with which Italy was threatened when that poor infatuated Count of Chambord was expected to have his own day. A so-called "International Artistic Association" was got up besides, who opened a mock bazaar of art and antiquity, in which, among other

wonderful relics, they showed the tail of St. Anthony's pig, the beak of the dove from Noah's Ark, a rib or two of Jonah's whale, and, finally, St. Lawrence's gridiron, St. Bartholomew's hide, and "the basin with which Pilate washed his hands, still stained with the ink with which he had signed his iniquitous sentence," &c. These are absurdities in very bad taste, doubtless, and may even be denounced as profanities; but the priests ought to bear in mind that irreverence of all sacred things,—the institution of "Popes of Folly" and "Abbots of Misrule,"—at all times and in all countries, sprang up with their sanction, if not at their instigation; and that noise and gross misconduct always were, and still are, tolerated in Roman churches, on the part of Catholics as well as of heretics, during the celebration of the most solemn rites, so long as it is hoped that he who comes to scoff may stop to pay. There are hardly any relics or images, hardly any religious rites or mysteries, connected with Roman worship about which churchmen and laymen have hesitated to "make fun" since the days of Boccaccio.

The merry season has not given any extraordinary impulse to fancy balls, masked balls, fairs, lotteries, or any other of those entertainments for which charity furnishes the pretext. Nor have private parties been very numerous. The Doria, Pallavicini, and other great houses have been thrown open, and a few balls have been given by foreign diplomatists, and especially by M. and Madame von Keudell

85270

at the Caffarelli Palace on the Capitol. In a neighbouring building, the Palazzo dei Conservatori, the Municipality of Rome assembled a large mob for a city ball given in behalf of infant asylums. No one present seemed greatly surprised or discomposed by the oddity of the effect produced by gaudy ladies' dresses, jewels, and bare shoulders in those apartments where huge mediæval popes frowned in marble at the dancers; and the orchestra fiddled away with all their might, indifferent to the frescoes on the walls, whence the horrors of martyred saints done to the life by the old masters stared them in the face.

At many of these festivities the presence of royalty seemed to constitute the chief attraction. The King himself had gone to Naples; but the Princess Margaret, a host in herself, is always ready to promote other people's happiness, and she knows how much her gracefulness and graciousness contribute to it, making up for the absence of those violet and scarlet prelates who were for so many years considered the chief ornaments of Roman *soirées*.

The Princess appeared at one of the *réunions* at M. von Keudell's, the German Minister, wearing a dress of cloth of gold, a present from the Emperor of Russia, with a train of black satin trimmed with lace—a stiff and somewhat ponderous garment, which it took all the elegance and agility of her slender person to wear with ease. With all this

encumbrance, however, and a gold chain twined in several coils round her head, and quaintly fastened under her chin, she stood up for dance after dance, and went through a two hours' cotillon, winning every heart by the preference she awarded to modesty, picking out her partners among the bashful cavaliers who least presumed to claim her attention, and who made themselves as small as they could in the rear of the crowd. She finally sat down with a German Professor, with whom, as he declined to dance with her, she expressed herself determined to have "a chat on Roman mediæval curiosities."

Splendid uniforms and tasteful ladies' costumes, rank, beauty, and all that gives charm to society, were to be met at these Roman gatherings; but, in my opinion, the peculiar interest that attached to them depended on the presence of the Princess. With her, a party was everything that is successful; without her, nothing.

Whatever the Roman Carnival of 1874 may have turned out to be for grown-up persons, the children have certainly not been balked of their legitimate share in its pleasures. The little Prince of Naples, the Princess Margaret's only son, now five years old, entertained his little court at a fancy ball, given at the British Minister's residence at Porta Pia. The dancing was kept up with considerable spirit from two to five P.M., the little infant Prince leading out Lady Paget's child for the first quad-

rille. The children were about two scores, of whom five or six were English. The Princess Margaret and a few parents of the dancers were present. This ball, with its lively costumes and happy juvenile faces, was, at all events, a pretty sight, if there was none other, at the Carnival; and the grace with which it was conducted by the lovely hostess gave it a peculiar charm in the eyes of the few grown-up persons who were privileged to be in attendance.

In the evening of that same day the Princess Margaret gave a splendid ball at the Quirinal, and the King came up from Naples on purpose to entertain guests at a grand court dinner.

The weather, on the whole, perversely interfered with all private and public festivities; showers of rain with the drives on the Corso, and gusts of wind with the show of the *Moccoletti*.

CHAPTER VII.

THE POPE AND THE KING.

The Quirinal and the Vatican—The Tycoon and the Mikado—Church and State—Civil Marriage—Lay and Clerical Education—Loaves and Fishes—The Pope—The King—Italian Statesmanship.

If the subject were not too serious and fraught with too much danger, it would be impossible not to laugh at the efforts which are being made to find room enough in Rome for the King and the Pope. Room enough there would be if men were only willing to leave matters as they are; but all attempts to establish an understanding between the Vatican and the Quirinal, all endeavours to bring about what is called a *Modus Vivendi*, have no other results than to raise new obstacles in the way of any chance of a quiet life.

There has been for these last four years no end to negotiations between the King's Government and the Holy See, either with the laudable intent of reconciling the Vatican to the existence of the Italian kingdom, or with the less creditable design, on either side, of proving to the world that if the negotiations to that effect are unsuccessful, they

only founder against the blind obstinacy and the irrational pretensions of "the other party." Much of all this manœuvring is carried on through the intervention of obscure and unacknowledged agents. But in recent instances the King himself has taken the initiative in his own name and on his own undivided responsibility, and then it was that we heard the Pope declaring that "certain wishes in favour of reconciliation had been addressed to him both verbally and in writing by persons of very exalted rank, begging him to pardon all the enemies of the Church, and withdraw the excommunications;" but concluding that "he cannot make peace with the enemies of the Church, or accept long custom as a justification of the present order of things."

The Pope is quite right from his own point of view, and his position, if he clings to it, is unassailable. What can be the subject or object of such underhand negotiations? What are the points in dispute between the King's Government and the Pope's Council? They may be mainly reduced to two. The King has dispossessed the Pope of his temporal dominions, and he has established civil liberty at the expense of ecclesiastical authority. With respect to the Pope's temporalities, the King's Government has no other compensation to offer than a pension to the Pontiff of 3,200,000 francs. The Pope has hitherto refused the bounty, because he could not receive it without acknowledging the

receipt through his Secretary of State; and such an act on his part might be construed into an acceptance of accomplished facts, and a recognition of Victor Emmanuel as King of Italy and of Rome. The Italian Government hoped to get over the difficulty by declaring themselves ready to dispense with the formality of a receipt. Those three millions of francs burn in their pocket, and the Pope would oblige them by accepting his pension, even without any acknowledgment on his part. It so happens, however, that the Pope is in no need of Italian paper money, and that his Peter's pence in gold and silver make him far richer than the King himself with his twelve millions' Civil List. No breach in the *non possumus* armour can be made by an appeal to the Pope's temporal interests, and the question is, what better chance there may be in a tender of submissiveness to the Pope's spiritual authority.

The limits between the authority of the King and that of the Pope were defined in 1871 by that "Law of Papal Guarantees" which was supposed to have established civil and religious freedom on perfectly equal terms. Those terms were satisfactory to the State, but could not, of course, be made acceptable to the Church, unless they were imposed by a necessity against which there should be no appeal. The experiment of reconciling ecclesiastical authority with civil freedom has been made in various countries, and was tried even in

the Papal States itself by that ill-fated Minister of Pius IX., Pellegrino Rossi, who perished in the attempt in 1848. But if it ever succeeded anywhere, it was only in those communities where the priest is compelled to circumscribe the exercise of his authority within the precincts of the sanctuary, where he urges no claims on those who do not voluntarily conform to his creed. In Italy there is a Constitution proclaiming Roman Catholicism as the religion of the State, and there is a Government professing to have no creed whatever, and to possess no power to enforce any. The Church, on the other hand, contends that Romau Catholicism is the religion of the immense majority, nay, of the universality of the Italian people; she ignores dissent and the still more prevailing unbelief, and insists that as the interpreter of the laws of God, she should be, not only independent of the laws of men, but placed above such laws, at least in all things connected with the exercise of her sacred ministry.

How a Free Church could on such terms be compatible with a Free State, one may see from a variety of practical instances. The State, for example, decided that marriage should be considered a civil act; the Church looked upon it as a Sacrament. No objection was raised to the sacrament being celebrated as a religious rite, but stress was laid upon the necessity for the performance of the civil contract; and, as the Church exerted all her

cunning to evade that enactment, a new Bill was brought before Parliament to make the civil contract obligatory before the religious ceremony could be proceeded with. The Pope demanded that the obnoxious Bill should be withdrawn, but the King's Government, although they dare not openly recede from a measure which is strictly logical, and which they have put forth after mature deliberation, have been shaken in their purpose, and, partly from a desire to conciliate the priests, partly from other motives, which I shall have occasion to explain, have contrived to hinder its progress through its various stages, and have actually laid it on the shelf.

In the same manner the State assumes the duty of imparting instruction to the whole people. It admits the free competition of private and consequently also of ecclesiastical schools. But it insists upon exercising in its own interest the right of inspecting all public or private educational establishments. The Church would fain claim exemption from this supervision in favour of her own institutions; but as she has still nearly nine-tenths of the youths of the rising generation under her tuition, to allow her to close her schools against the agents of the Government would be to deliver into her hand the most powerful weapon to be used and abused against the State. The King's Government were willing enough that their inspector's visits to the priest's school should be few and far between, but

no Italian statesman would venture on so suicidal a policy as to consent that they should cease altogether. For be it remembered the Government in Italy has at the utmost only the power to propose, but it is for the Parliament and still more for public opinion to dispose; and however the Chambers may be influenced and public opinion hoodwinked on a thousand other matters, there is among the present generation a large body of patriots, who, whatever they may do when they grow old, act in their youth upon instincts which are equally unerring and invincible. The Italian Liberals are very anxious to evince the utmost forbearance towards the believers' consciences; they seize every opportunity to show their outward veneration for a creed which has lost all hold upon their inner convictions; they put up with public exhibitions of St. Ambrose's bones, or with the semi-yearly performance of the boiling of St. Januarius's blood; but it is on condition that religion should never again rest on despotic priestly ascendency—that even though the Church be national, allegiance to her should be altogether individual and spontaneous.

There is, however, something connected with the Government of the Church, over which, by the very terms of the Papal guarantees, the State still reserved a certain control. The Pope was made free to appoint Bishops in Italy, and the Bishops to ordain priests and to nominate incumbents to vacant livings. But the State, for its own part, holds the temporalities

of episcopal sees and of clerical benefices at its disposal, and reserves the right of bestowing the good things in its gift on those prelates or priests who at least give the civil authorities due notice of their nomination. But the Pope demands that the State should waive even the last traces of these rights of investiture—that the appointment of a divine by the Holy See, or by its subordinate authorities, should involve his immediate and unconditional admission to all the advantages and emoluments attached to his office, without any need of application to the agents or representatives of the Civil Government for a *Placet* or an *Exequatur;* so that the clergy should be utterly emancipated from the control of the State, not only in their spiritual, but also in their temporal capacity, and the Church, with all her wealth, should constitute an *Imperium in Imperio,* whether she was amicably or hostilely disposed towards the State.

Clearly the King's Government, however inclined to concession, could never meet these exigencies of the Holy See even half way, for the tide of popular opinion in Italy is setting in quite a contrary direction.

But were even the pretensions of the Papal Court admitted, what certainty is there that concession to this extent would be deemed sufficient, and that it would not instantly become the basis for new and endless demands? A score of years ago direct dominion over St. Peter's patrimony satisfied the

Pope's ambition; but since the proclamation of the dogma of Infallibility his aspirations stop short of nothing but absolute sovereignty over the Catholic world. The Italians flattered themselves that they had achieved everything by the overthrow of the Pope's temporal power, and that they could now allow free scope for the exercise of his spiritual authority; but they perceive that there are points of contact between the spiritual and the temporal which will easily enable the Pope to turn the one authority into an instrument for the recovery of the other. That matter of the definition of the limits between the civil and the ecclesiastical powers is very far from settled either in Italy or in Germany, Austria or Switzerland. The war is to be waged, and *à outrance*, and Italy must be in the brunt of the fight, for what for other nations is merely a matter of social order is for the Italian people a question of existence.

But, while the question is pending, what good can come of any effort to reconcile the Vatican with the Quirinal? What hope can be entertained that the Italian Yeddo may have room to accommodate both the Tycoon and the Mikado? What will ever induce the Pope to put up with the presence of the King in Rome except the conviction of his utter inability to turn him out? Most assuredly the position of the old Pontiff becomes daily more intolerable. From his windows in the Vatican he can see the King's banner waving from

the roof of what was once his Palace on the Quirinal. In the stillness of his apartment he may hear the trumpets of the troops who stormed his capital, and the shouts of the populace which once were so enthusiastic for him, now greeting the constitutional sovereign on his way to open Parliament; and he can see the flash of the fireworks in front of his own Castle of San' Angelo, celebrating the consummation of that Italian unity which involved his own dethronization, and reduced his earthly dominions to the limits of a palace and a garden.

Surely no fallen potentate was ever more cruelly beset with the evidence of his former greatness hourly aggravating the poignancy of his present humiliation. It seems hard that in a Papal city, where a Pope still resides, men should look in vain for even the merest vestige of Papal power! And if the sense of his temporal losses were not enough, the Pope is now called upon to stand upon the defence of that faith which was once law, on the very spot where fetters and faggots did duty as arguments, where unbelieving subjects had to compound with their consciences by purchasing confession tickets, where English and other heretics were banished for Christian worship to "temples" near the pig-market outside the walls, and Jews had to ransom themselves by a heavy tribute from the ignominy of running races bare-backed along the Corso in the Carnival for the amusement of an orthodox populace.

That times change, and that even Popes must acquiesce in the change, Pius IX. might have been willing enough to admit; but he was not prepared to see Rome the "sink" of all dissenting abominations, the trysting-place of black Protestants and other ranting fanatics; he had no little repugnance to an open controversy being held between one of his own priests and a divine of a rival Church on the tradition of Peter's twenty-five years' Pontificate in Rome; he even more strongly objected to his own Encyclic being pulled to pieces in four popular lectures, in an Italian Evangelical school, by Father Gavazzi; he little dreamed of ever living to see the free sale of the Diodati Bibles at every bookstall; and he did not look forward to the chance of Freemasons establishing their lodges, and Jew editors their newspaper offices, on both sides of the Tiber—*Fanfulla*, *Pasquino*, and other humorous publications turning the myth of his imprisonment into caricature, and laughing to scorn all the noise of his Vatican thunder.

That freedom with all its light and shade, its use and abuse, and (in spite of the displeasure of all honest men and the watchfulness of the police) with all its profane and ribald excesses, should ever be at home in the Holy City, where Giordano Bruno was put to death and Galileo tortured, was certainly more than the Pope would have bargained for had he ever been consulted; but the fact is that the Italians first came in and then bethought themselves

of suing for admission; and if they intend to stay where they are, they must now do so on their own terms; for the only condition on which the Pope could ever be induced to condone their occupation of Rome must needs be their instant evacuation of the same.

On the other hand, the King has no great comfort in the position which this unnatural dualism has made for him. There are many among his subjects, and many more among strangers, to remind him that he is not the first personage in his own royal residence. Princes with historic names and more than lordly fortunes ignore his presence and decline his advances. States with which he is at peace, and which acknowledge the Italian kingdom, have their ambassadors accredited to the "Papal Government," and moor their frigates at Civita Vecchia for the "protection of the Holy Father." French priests refuse Christian burial to French subjects if from their official position they are only suspected of having favoured Italian interests. The Pope never opens his lips except to declaim against the "Subalpine" usurper, and his invective is taken up by the Vatican organs as by a pack of hounds in full cry—a pack of curs, native and foreign, presuming on the privileges of the Papal guarantees, and enjoying that impunity which was only stipulated in favour of the inviolable Pontiff.

And yet it is certainly from no fault of his that Victor Emmanuel finds himself at Rome, lodged

in the Quirinal, and at war with the "Apostolic Captive" at the Vatican. Had the King had his own way the Pope would never have been robbed of one inch of his territory, there would never have been one monk the less in Italy, nor would the Church have ever lost one farthing of her revenue. Whatever he may be in politics, Victor Emmanuel in ecclesiastical matters is from choice neither a revolutionist nor a reformer. Loyalty to his subjects and patriotic honour impelled him to take the field against Austria and against all who mustered on her side. That the Pope and his priests should be among his adversaries was only the King's misfortune. The King had duties to his country, and he fulfilled them, regardless of any consequences his conduct might entail on himself here or hereafter. As a constitutional King he did not consider himself a free agent, and he is now surprised to find himself responsible for deeds which the obligations inherited from his father imposed upon him. He was not willingly a foe to the priests; he can conceive no act of his by which he should have drawn upon himself their relentless enmity, and closed every door against future reconciliation. Victor Emmanuel is, in his own way, a believer. He has been trained in a school where veneration for the sacred character of the priesthood is the beginning and end of religion. He is not the man to sneer at excommunications, or to sleep quietly under the Pope's curses. He is

at a loss to account for all this intensity of hatred. He cannot explain so relentless a severity on the part of the "Vicar of a God of Peace." He has not been taught that kings' sins could ever be past remission; that there are deeds of spoliation for which there can be no absolution without restitution; that even robbing the Church is not to be forgiven to Italy as it has been to France, Spain, and most other Roman Catholic communities. Hence his ever-recurring solicitations for peace; his endeavours to bring the Pope and his advisers to milder counsels; his unwearied hopes of an eventual settlement of the dispute; and on the failure of all his efforts, his qualms of misgiving and almost of remorse, the uneasy feeling which allows him no rest in any place, and least of all in the desecrated halls of the old papal residence, and, finally, those dark fits of despondency in which it is said he is tempted to rid himself of all his difficulties by abdication.

It never, perhaps, occurred to the King, or to the gentlemen who are now or were lately at the head of his Government, that the easiest and surest way of overcoming difficulties is to "grasp your nettle." It were idle to inquire now how matters would have turned out had the King followed closely upon the footsteps of the *Bersaglieri* who stormed Porta Pia; had he on the very day of his arrival had himself crowned, or, like Napoleon the First, snatched the crown from the altar, and crowned

himself in St. Peter's; had he at once called together his Parliament, if not in Monte Citorio or in the Palazzo Madama, then in the first church, theatre, barn, riding-house, or tennis-court that was at hand, and there proclaimed that he had come to demolish an old edifice of iniquity, that he intended practically to remind the Pope that "his Master's kingdom was not of this world," and that the sword and crozier should never again be grasped by the same hand; had he bidden the representatives of the nation to proceed to legislate for Rome in Rome itself, to draw up the Bill of Papal Guarantees in the Pope's presence, and laid it before the Pope for him to take or to leave, with an intimation that the offer should not be made twice; had he, in short, done the thing promptly and done it thoroughly, possibly he might now be nearer to the solution of the most arduous of all problems than he finds himself after four years' under-hand negotiation and shilly-shallying.

But then daring and decisive measures do not seem suited to the temperament of Italian statesmen. Their reliance is in a temporizing and forbearing policy. Patience and contrivance have hitherto led them far and safely. In the solution of their national question, Providence has turned their worst enemies into their best allies. May they not hope to be equally befriended in the settlement of the Papal quarrel? May they not hope that the Pope's

very blindness and stubbornness, and the moderation and fortitude with which they put up with his arrogance and violence, may enable all men to come to a just estimate of the merits of the dispute, and give rise to a general wish to terminate it in the manner most favourable to the cause of human progress and the interests of the world's peace?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CARDINALS.

The Next Conclave—The Sacred College—Foreign Cardinals—Italian Cardinals—The Chances of Succession—Parties in the Sacred College—Desirable Candidates—The Conclave and the Italian Government.

WHILE the Pope has been for this last twelvemonth playing hide and seek with death, men have, as is their custom, been speculating on the eventual reversion of his old slippers. The thought of what may and must happen when the illness by which the Holy Father is so often prostrated proves at last fatal, has taken a strong hold of men's minds, and will not release them till the event has been actually realized. Italy feels that she ought to make ready for the Conclave—a matter of some consequence at all times, but at this juncture fraught with results for this country and for the Catholic world of which it seems difficult to exaggerate the magnitude. Those among the Italians who are least friendly to the Pope have for a long time been desirous that his days may be indefinitely prolonged. It suits them to have the Holy Father a prisoner at the Vatican—certainly not "an Apostolic

Captive" in the sense that the Ultramontanes fondly represent Pius IX., but a man tied to the spot by his years and ailments, unable to follow either his own instincts or the suggestions of rash advisers, which might prompt him to some untoward movement, fatal both to the welfare of the Church and the peace of the world. The Italians would never raise any obstacle to the Pope "going on his travels," if such were his settled wish. But they are not sorry that his declining health should put every thought, even of a short drive to Castel Gandolfo, or some princely villa on the Latian Hills, so decidedly out of the question. If the Holy See is to be removed from its old quarters, if the Church is to suffer a second "Captivity of Babylon," it is well at least that it should be done by the free and deliberate act of a Conclave, or by that of a new and less irresponsible Pontiff, consulting the opinion of a set of men possibly uninfluenced by the blind obstinacy of those who constitute the present Council.

There is doubtless another side to the question. The prolongation of the life of a Pope who "has seen the years of Peter," and to whose person and character a peculiar *prestige* is attached, is incessantly widening the breach which yawns between Church and State throughout the Roman Catholic world, and deepening the animosity of the parties arrayed in Guelph and Ghibelline camps, not only in Italy, but in France, Switzerland and Germany.

That reconciliation which is altogether hopeless during the present Pontificate may, owing to its unconscionable prolongation, become equally impracticable under any imaginable future combination. The utter helplessness to which age and infirmity condemn Pius IX. compels the Church to a truce which may become open war under a more active and ambitious Pontiff. As soon as the Court of Rome is capable of locomotion, it may be tempted to some irrevocable measure. The Italians have had ample time to prepare themselves for such a contingency: they are willing to let this or any other Pope go, but they are determined that nothing short of a general European convulsion, and the utter annihilation of their power as a nation, shall ever bring him back.

When the Pope dies, and it may be within a month as well as within a year, "What will the Cardinals do?" That is the question; and the answer must be sought in the temper and disposition of the majority of the Members of the Sacred College. These prelates, whose office has been for these last twenty-eight years a mere pageant, begin to feel all the power and importance with which a vacancy of the Holy See must soon, for one moment, invest them. The Pontiff is while he lives the most absolute of rulers. He is under no obligation to ask the advice of the Sacred College, or to follow it when it has been asked and given. The ascendency of any member of that body over the

Pope is always personal, and he will as often be guided by one of his minor house-prelates, by some obscure monk, or, as happened in the case of the last Pope, by a valet, as by any of the red-hatted Princes of the Church. It is only towards the end of a Pontificate, when a Pope, swayed by the prompting of a posthumous ambition, indulges fond and usually vain hopes of influencing the choice of his successor, that he is apt to show much eagerness to have the Cardinals about him. And this is especially the case with Pius IX., a Pontiff who has almost outlived all his electors, and whose successor must be appointed by his own creatures.

The Sacred College consists, when completed, of seventy members. It had last year been reduced by death to forty-three; of these, as many as thirty-five had been named by the present Pope, and there had been no new batch made since 1868. The reluctance of the Pope to fill up the vacancies in the Sacred College was supposed to be actuated by a dread of introducing new elements into a body on the devotion of the existing members of which he flattered himself that he could safely reckon. These men he might fancy were known to him; his will had long been a law to them; and if the line they were to follow in the choice of a new Pope were conveyed to them, either verbally or by writing, or by a mere hint on his part, they would, he trusted, faithfully and implicitly obey.

It need not be observed that if the Infallible

thought so, he was probably labouring under a delusion. Not a little of the regard and deference shown to him by the future Pope-makers is purely personal, and is owing in a great measure to compassion for the Pope's age and infirmities, and reluctance to distress and chafe a mind notoriously peevish and irritable. But, once the breath out of the Pope's body, the Cardinals' votes are their own, and they are as anxious to vindicate their freedom of action as they have hitherto been obsequious and passive; so that if the choice of the necessary two-thirds of the voters fall on the person designated by the supposed "last will and testament" of the deceased Pontiff, it will simply be because that will and testament happens to suit the electors' own views.

To what extent these views may harmonize with the wishes of the present Pope is a point on which it may, perhaps, be easier to speculate if I subjoin a brief survey of the members of the Sacred College as it existed before last autumn. Out of the forty-three living Cardinals at that time only eleven were not Italians; and although by the last creation the proportion has been somewhat altered in behalf of the foreign prelates, the natives of Italy still possess an enormous preponderance. Now whether an Italian or a foreigner be chosen as a successor of Pius IX. is a matter depending on considerations of a rather high order. For three centuries and a half—*i. e.*, since the death of

Adrian VI., in 1523—no one not born in Italy and of Italian parentage has sat on St. Peter's Chair. The tenacity with which the Church at all times clung to her temporal sovereignty, localized her Government, and made of what was to belong to all mankind the privilege and monopoly of one people. Both in the Sacred College and in the Œcumenic Council the Italians are at least four to one; and even at this moment the exclusion of all and each of the foreign Cardinals is a matter entirely dependent on the will of their Italian colleagues. Is there any possibility that, with a view to give the Church a more universal and truly Catholic character, the Italians may now be induced to waive their long-enjoyed advantage, renounce their vested right on the Tiara, and, looking to the common rather than to their own interest, they may reform in a Catholic sense the whole hierarchy, and re-organize it on principles equally just and fair to all Christian nations? And can they feel sure that if they choose, for instance, a Frenchman, he will not lavish upon Frenchmen those dignities and emoluments which were hitherto the Italians' birthright; and that the change, intended to establish a balance of power among all nationalities, may not after all merely substitute French for Italian preponderance, and thereby awaken jealousies which from long custom have lain dormant? English and German Catholics have long fretted at the notion of bowing in obedience to an "Italian

priest." Will the enthronement of a French, or of a Spanish, German, English, or any other priest be more soothing to national pride? Will it not more probably afflict the Church with dissension and schism, and suggest the idea of separate national establishments?

Upon all these considerations, and especially that of actual possession, it seems natural to expect that the Italian Cardinals will go to the next Conclave with a full determination to hold their own, however difficult it may be to find among themselves either a *Grand Seigneur* like Hohenlohe or Schwartzerberg, or a zealous Churchman like Donnet or Guibert, or a scholar like Von Rauscher or Pitra.

Among the Italian Cardinals there are now only a few men belonging to high and especially princely or papal families — Patrizi, Carafa, Borromeo, Riario Sforza, to whom may be added Bonaparte. But princely influence has long since ceased to exercise any great influence over the majority of the Cardinals. The College has been to a great extent democratized, and among the men of rank above named there is only one, Riario Sforza, Archbishop of Naples, recommendable, perhaps, on other grounds besides the *prestige* of birth and station. A twelvemonth ago this prelate was supposed to have the best chance.

The learned men among the Italians are Grassellini, Morichini, and the Franciscan Panebianco;

but learning for itself has at no time been a ladder to power at the Vatican, though it has often been used as an instrument in the hands of him who wielded power. A man like the late Mai or Mezzofanti might be admitted into the College to confer lustre upon it; but though in it he would never be of it. He would be like a military surgeon—in the army, yet not of the army; always an officer, yet never a general, or, indeed, properly a soldier.

Far more than knowledge, character is the requisite that men look for in a ruler; and unfortunately Cardinals—especially those resident in Rome—are for many years doomed to such a life of self-concentration and retirement, they contract such confirmed habits of dissimulation and reticence, that the true disposition of their mind is a riddle even to those most intimate with them. The next Papal election must needs be something quite different from any of the preceding Conclaves. Very little of the personal considerations, or of the family or party intrigues, which in former occurrences biassed the Cardinals' minds will be at work in this instance. All that is important to ascertain is whether the policy, both temporal and spiritual, of Pius IX. is to be pursued or abandoned—whether the doctrines laid out in the Syllabus and the dogma of Infallibility are to be carried to the extremes to which they have lately been tending. All this undoubtedly depends in

a great measure on the choice of the Cardinals in the next Conclave, and on that choice rest, therefore, in a great measure the mutual goodwill of nations as well as the unity of the Church.

As whatever may be the aims of the Cardinals' minds, their wish must be to see them strenuously carried out, it is evident that the qualities by which a candidate will be most forcibly recommended to their suffrage must be energy and temper. Their choice must, therefore, steer clear of feeble senility and youthful rashness. Consequently, such men as were born several years before the present century—Amat, Patrizi, De Angelis, Antonacci, Caterini, &c.—are likely to be excluded on the score of age, unless, as has sometimes happened, the Cardinals despair of agreeing upon any plausible candidate, when, in presence of insurmountable difficulties, and simply to gain time, they elect what they call a *Papa di Tomba*, a mere stop-gap—a man whose decrepitude is the only title to his elevation, and who is expected to make room for another at no distant interval. On the other hand, men whose years have not reached the half century, —such as Bilio, La Valletta, and that Bonaparte whose chances sunk with the fortunes of his family at Sedan,—have always been looked upon as mere lads, and deemed unfit for Pontifical offices since the days of Marozia and Theodora.

The number of really elegible candidates is thus practically reduced to somewhat less than a score,

and these, following the line of demarcation laid down by Cardinal Pallavicino, as quoted by Ruggero Bonghi in his "Essay on the Conclave," may be divided into "Saintly" and "Political" Cardinals —those, that is, who would govern the Church upon the dictates of their own narrow and bigoted views, and those who think that the exigencies of the times and the tendencies of human progress should also be considered and inevitable compromise accepted. Pallavicino declares that all the greatest evils and dangers of the Church have invariably arisen from the choice of a saintly Pope; and had he lived to see the Pontificate of Pius IX. he would certainly not have been greatly shaken in his convictions. Of the Cardinals who may be called upon to elect the new Pope, nine—Patrizi, Panebianco, Bizzarri, Bilio, Caterini, Capalti, Borromeo, Riario Sforza, and Cullen — are, according to Bonghi, inclined to vote for a "Saintly," *i. e.* uncompromising Pope; while twenty-two—Sacconi, De Angelis, Vannicelli-Casoni, Asquini, Carafa, Morichini, Pesci, Antonucci, Milesi, Trevisanato, De Luca, Guidi, La Valletta, Consolini, or in other words, fourteen Italians with all the foreigners except one, the Irishman Cullen— are expected to prefer a "Political" Pope, *i. e.* one bound to abandon the *Non possumus* ground taken up by Pius IX. The six remaining Italians, Di Pietro, De Silvestri, Barili, Grassellini, Mertel, Amat, although staunch to the present Pope, are also supposed to harbour mild and conciliatory

views. As to Antonelli, all men agree in considering him altogether ineligible, as he, like all other Secretaries of State before him, has to bear the blame of all the blunders of the Government of which he has too long been the head. In the Conclave itself his conduct is likely to be wavering and time-serving, obsequious to the majority on whichever side it may declare itself. "Mental alienation," Bonghi continues, "would prove an insuperable obstacle to the election of Milesi and Grassellini; Caterini, Bizzarri, Amat and Asquini would be excluded on account of their rickety health; De Silvestri and Mertel in consequence of their uncouth manners, narrowness of judgment and inexperience in worldly affairs. Di Pietro is deemed too liberal and free from prejudices; Ferrieri too deficient in courage and resolution.

"The Cardinals who seem to have the best chances of winning the suffrages of the majority are, among the Conservatives, Panebianco and Capalti; among the doubtful and temporizing, Sacconi, Morichini, Pesci, Antonucci, Trevisanato, De Luca, Guidi, Berardi, Consolini; foremost among the Liberals, Barili." I must add that Bonghi looks upon the election of Cullen, Schwartzenberg or Von Rauscher, although they are foreigners, as a possible contingency. One only remains to be mentioned, Riario Sforza, the Archbishop of Naples, whose chances are, or at least were, in the opinion of many people the best. He is a strong Infallibilist, an

out-and-out supporter of the *Syllabus* and of all the doctrines held and promulgated by Pius IX. But he has shown great practical sense in Naples, where, for the first time since 1848, he, a priest, recommended the faithful to go to the poll and take their share in political contests, at least in municipal elections. The experiment has not been very successful, nor has the example been extensively followed. Still the mere recognition of the principle of popular suffrage on the part of a strong-minded and violent Churchman may be taken as a homage to the spirit of the age. If upon attaining the Pontificate, Riario Sforza can build the Church upon *that* Rock, his policy must trace out a very different course from the one followed by his predecessors, who based the Pontifical throne upon bayonets, and who enforced orthodoxy through the interference of the secular arm.

The proclamation of new Cardinals to which the Pope was at last brought in the course of the autumn of 1873 will not materially alter the prospect of the future Papal election. The new members of the College were either bishops of remote foreign dioceses, appointed with a view to gratify the wishes of their respective countries and their rulers, or Nuncios accredited to the same Courts, and evidently advanced with the same object. The only man of note among the foreign prelates is the Archbishop of Paris, Guibert, a firebrand whose temper and style make him obnoxious to all

parties, as equally dangerous to friend or foe. More importance was attached to the nomination of Tarquini, a Jesuit, *i. e.*, one of that brotherhood who were supposed to decline, and indeed to spurn, all promotion out of their own order, and none of whom had for many years consented to wear the purple. The choice of Tarquini was looked upon as irrefragable evidence of the ascendency of that Ultramontanism of which the Loyola brethren constitute the forlorn hope, and of which Tarquini himself, as a writer in the *Civiltà Cattolica*, was the standard-bearer. But if such were the views of the Pope, they were doomed to speedy disappointment by the death of the Jesuit-Cardinal only a very few weeks after his promotion.

A preliminary point for the Cardinals to settle is whether the Conclave is to be held in or out of Rome and Italy, and their resolution on that score must be greatly influenced by the leisure the nature of the Pope's last illness may allow them for deliberation, and consequently by the chance afforded to the foreign members of arriving in time to have a voice in the Council. For in despite of the overwhelming Italian majority in the Sacred College, the foreigners might still sink the scale on behalf of one of their own number; and the enthronement of a Frenchman or German, or more plausibly of an Englishman, on St. Peter's Chair, might remove the main object of contention by implying a renunciation of that temporal sovereignty

which made the Papacy so essentially Italian. But whether the Sacred College proclaim a new Pope, *præsente cadavere*, the moment the breath is out of the body of the present Pontiff, or whether they adjourn to Marseilles, Monaco, Malta, or any other place where they may consider themselves free, their choice, however challenged by other powers, must needs be binding on Italy, a country which has adopted the maxim of a Free Church in a Free State, and has embodied that principle in its law of Papal Guarantees.

There is no doubt that were the Cardinals to go abroad for the choice of a new Pope, and then return to Rome with him, they would find their position here altered considerably for the worse. The Italian Government may well bid them "go further and fare worse." The Cardinals have not failed to sound the disposition of all the Courts of Europe, and they are satisfied there is not one power, Catholic or Protestant, that would advise their migration, or burden itself with their presence. The Roman Catholic Church has made its bed in Rome and must lie in it, whether that bed be laid on the soft ground of the temporal power, or whether it rests on such a basis of spiritual independence as a compact with the Italian Government may insure. So long as the Pope and his Court reside at the Vatican, some plausible and permanent arrangement between the Holy See and the Italian Government, however difficult, and as Pius IX.

says, "impossible," it may appear now, is merely a question of time. On the present terms of open yet dormant hostility, Italy and the Papacy cannot for ever live. The Cardinals may remain and make friends, or they may go and declare actual war; but where that war is to be waged, and who are to be the combatants engaged in it on either side, they will only be able to make out by the experiment.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ULTRAMONTANES.

Cisalpines and Transalpines—Religious Apathy in Italy—The Italian Clergy: Town Priests; Country Priests—The People's Religion—Lay and Clerical Profanity—Latins and Teutons—The Pope's Faith—Cismontanes and Ultramontanes—Italian Views—Foreign Views—Pilgrims and Crusaders.

WHO and what are the Ultramontanes? There are, it seems, two sides to Roman Catholicism: there are twenty-five millions of people of that confession south of the Alps and eight times that number to the north of those mountains. Geographically speaking, with respect to Rome, the Italians are Cismontanes. The Ultramontanes, or Transalpines, are those on the other side. There are Catholics in Italy who would wish to see the Pope as he was, King at Rome; but there are Catholics in other countries who would make him king all over the world. In Italy Popery is, and always was, the expression of a mean and limited, but substantial ambition; abroad, its aim is a vague but all-controlling domination. Within his own territory the Pontiff had sway over the bodies of a few hundred thousand subjects; but beyond those

limits he claims to be the Lord of all men's souls. Aspiration to universal theocracy is Ultramontanism. The Italians understand nothing about it.

When Baretti wrote from London under the impression of reminiscences called up by the celebration of Guy Fawkes's day, he descanted with a sneer on the difference between a "*Cattolico all' Inglese*" and a "*Cattolico all' Italiana*," the distinction being between Northern fanaticism and Southern apathy. And Manzoni, a man of sincere piety, congratulated his countrymen on the fact that the unbrotherly feuds which so often stained Italian fields with Italian blood at least "never had their origin in the sanctuary"—not suspecting that, if Italy never had religious wars, this was probably because her children never thought religion worth fighting for. It is marvellous to see how easy his faith sits on the conscience of an Italian. There is no country in the world more utterly dead to all religious inquiry than Italy is. The people of the upper classes disdain, those of the lower orders dread, any analysis of their faith. The very priests are no theologians; such men as Monsignor Nardi, Don Margotti, and the other Papal champions in newspapers, care nothing for the Word and simply deal in abuse. Like Father Gavazzi on the other side, they are mere crushers and bruisers, not reasoners; the very essence of their Christianity is hatred. The Roman Church in Italy ventures on no polemics; the Romanist controversialists are

French, Belgians, and English, hardly ever Italians. Italy never produced a Bossuet or a Fénelon. The only ascetic works published south of the Alps in our days are the productions of laymen, Manzoni and Silvio Pellico, and their character is moral, not theological. It has been the aim of the whole hierarchy, as soon as the faggot and the gibbet rid them of Protestant opposition, to reduce all religious worship to dumb shows and unmeaning practices. Sermons are not the daily bread in an Italian church, but even when preached and listened to, they bear little or no reference to faith and morals. Panegyrics of saints, illustrations of Dante's Hell and Limbo, and the commandments of the Church, are the themes of most discourses; nor is anything else to be learnt in the confessional. It is no business of your spiritual father to set you right on any point of your creed by arguing with you. Your orthodoxy is taken for granted as a matter of course, and beyond that, a profession of amateur scepticism has nothing to shock or alarm an Italian divine. He laughs it off as a good joke, and tells you if you have no faith he cannot give you one:—"*Où rien n'y a, Dieu perd son droit.*" He may cry out that you are lost, but he takes no trouble to prove that you are wrong.

After all, no one can give what he has not, and there is hardly any faith in the whole Italian hierarchy, from the Pope himself down to the meanest shaveling. The clergy here are a very

different set from their brethren in France or Belgium, in England or Ireland. You do not frequently see about the streets those square-faced, marble-browed priests who curdle the blood in your veins, as you pass them in Paris or Brussels, by their expression of stern resolution, of impassible, implacable deadness to human feelings. The immense majority of Italian priests are mere sensualists. Neither Dominic Guzman nor Ignatius Loyola was an Italian, nor Francis Xavier, nor the Bishop of Salignac. Ignorance and self-indulgence are the characteristic of the generality of this priesthood. Out of a hundred of them scarcely three or four are set apart for the duties of preachers or confessors; the great rabble of *preti da messa*, low-born and uneducated, only mumble Latin prayers which they do not even pretend to understand. A fine presence for the altar and a good voice for the choir are more highly prized than either brain for the loftiest, or heart for the gentlest, duties attached to the sacred ministry. The Italian clergy, to do them justice, are not to be charged with any lack of living charity, and in days of great popular calamity they are not unfrequently lavish of their help to their flock, regardless of hardship and danger, foremost in the battle with evil and death. But in ordinary times nothing can equal the idleness and unprofitableness, the vanity and inanity of their existence. You see them by hundreds strolling in the market-square, lounging about the stalls, busy with their

petty worldly concerns, their souls and bodies cleaving to the dust. No tradesman is more eager to "cut the shop" than the Italian priest when off duty. A single serious pious thought never crosses his mind. Learned men wearing the priest's collar are to be found in Italy; but they cease to be priestly in all but the collar the moment they take to books. Even when addicted to learning an Italian divine seldom meddles with divinity; he turns his attention to antiquity, to astronomy or natural philosophy, to all that may keep him clear of the quicksands of theological dispute. The mere mass-priest, however, never reads one line except his mass-book and breviary. In a country where most men are unemployed, the priest is the idlest of the idle. In an Italian town the parish clergy are hardly the tenth part of the sable brethren with three-cornered hats one meets in the streets. The immense majority is made up of loose mass-mongers, whose work is limited to a quarter of an hour's performance at some lonely altar, with or without spectators. All the rest of the day is at the priest's disposal, a burden upon him, unless he can hire himself out as a *figurante* at some grand *Te Deum*, benediction or funeral. How to kill his time is the great problem, for he cannot sit at table from breakfast to dinner, and the café, the theatre, and other Italian places of refuge are, as a general though not an invariable rule, closed against him. Hence all his resources lie in gross indulgence, and that is

what gives him the torpid, sensual, animal look which places him so low in the scale of human beings; hence the low brow, the florid complexion, the double chin, proverbial especially among the numerous family of cathedral and collegiate canons.

In the country the parish priests constitute the majority, and many of them are men of respectable, though often far from unblemished, character. The Italian parson is often a jolly fellow, who thinks it no harm to walk after his setter, or to lay out his nets for birds on a Sunday morning, or to join a game of bowls in the Sabbath afternoon. There is hardly a country priest in Italy who is not a smoker, though a cigar in a priest's mouth in the streets is a phenomenon with which I first became familiar in the old Papal States. A pipe before Mass, said a priest to me, does not break the strict fast enjoined to him who is to officiate, "unless he swallow the pipe." Yet the strictness of this ante-missal fast is so great that many of the clergy avoid washing in the forenoon, lest a drop of water imbibed unawares should unfit them for the "bloodless sacrifice," a fact which may account for their particularly dingy skin in a country where men in general are not over partial to water, either for external or internal application.

But if a country priest eschews the pure element in the morning, he makes up by a free use of unmixed liquor in the evening, nothing being more

common than for three or four parsons of adjoining villages to meet at each other's house, and to proceed from manse to manse, drawing corks and emptying bottles at each of them, till they can scarcely see their way home when they part late at night.

With such shepherds to guide one can easily imagine what the flock must be. Yet however clumsily the Italian priests may perform their part, they take care, if not to strengthen the people's tenets, at least to foster their prejudices. Propound any doctrinal thesis to an Italian of the lower classes, and he will either decline the engagement altogether, or, like a Chinese, give in to all your views with the most amiable condescension and coolness, concluding, however, that "he is only a carpenter or bootmaker, that matters of divinity must be left to divines and are no business of his." But ask him to sit down to a leg of mutton on one of his fast-days, or speak to him of the married priests of the Reformed denominations, and he will show signs of uneasiness, and look down at your boots for the cloven foot. Those paltry, mean matters of practice and discipline are his religion, and his priests know it. There has his faith its tower of strength. "*Bella religione! Preti che prendon moglie!*" he will say with a jeer and sneer when my lord bishop's daughters go past. The Italians, it has been justly said, are "too bad Catholics ever to make good Protestants." Attempts

to aid political revolution by religious reform have been made throughout the period of the late national struggle. And certainly it was felt that could Italy have awakened one fair morning thoroughly and unanimously Protestantized, she would undoubtedly have greatly puzzled the Pope and his supporters. But the thing could not be done. The Diodati Bible was imported into Italy by tons. Evangelical chapels on the broadest or narrowest principles were opened in the cities by hundreds; everywhere Waldensian temples have arisen; but all in vain. Profession of dissent in Italy will always be a personal matter. There will always be one church for all, though every man may have his own church for himself. I almost doubt whether even the Carnesecchi, the Paleario, and others who were burnt for their faith, were really in earnest. Everything connected with religion in Italy is dismissed with a jest. The Neapolitan historian, Giannone, being suspected of heresy at Venice, was taken before one of the three formidable State Inquisitors, and confessed that he indeed harboured some doubts about the Persons of the Trinity. "One or Three," observed the grim yet clement and latitudinarian patrician, "what does it matter to you? You have not got to keep them."

There is no instance, I believe, of any priest endeavouring to check the ribaldry and profanity, not to say disgusting obscenity, in which the people

of the lowest classes in Italy so freely indulge, and which is aimed by preference at the persons and things they are taught to hold most sacred. As I was coming down a steep hill in the Apennines the other day, it happened that the *vetturino*, a fine tall youth from Pistoia, allowed one of his jaded horses to stumble, fall, and break his knees on the hard road. The young man alighted from his coach-box, gazed at the havoc his own carelessness had made, then, as if at a loss what else to do, thrust both his hands into his fine chestnut hair, and fired such a volley of brutal, savage, atrocious oaths as would freeze the blood in the veins of a very heathen and make his hair stand on end. The exhibition of this impotent, senseless rage lasted fully a quarter of an hour. We had a goodly company of travellers both in and outside the coach, two smooth-shaven priests among the number; a crowd of peasants assembled from a neighbouring hamlet—men, women and children. Had the catastrophe happened in London, not the most depraved mob of costermongers and thieves could have refrained from breaking every bone in the miscreant's skin; yet the whole audience, and the priests with the rest, listened to all that heaven-storming invective with as much unconcern as if the powers above had got no worse than they richly deserved, as if the blundering driver was fully entitled after his mishap to refresh himself in the Capaneus style, and pay back the stars for the

evil influences which had brought his stumbling brute to the ground.

In this case loss of temper might be pleaded as an extenuating circumstance, as perhaps also in that of the priest, who, as he was losing at cards, started up, gnashing his teeth like a wild animal, and lifting his hands heavenwards, hissed out this as absurd as impious threat, "I shall have Thee between my thumb and finger to-morrow, and see if I do not serve Thee as Thou deservest." But blasphemies of the darkest and direst import—the "*Dio Ladro!*" "*Dio Birbetta!*" of the gentle Tuscan; the "*Man naggio o primo de Noviembre e o secundo!*" an ingeniously comprehensive curse on all saints and all souls, of the rough Neapolitan, and similar ribaldries and obscene expressions baffling translation—are used in cold blood and by way of jest, as mere expletives, flowers and elegancies of speech, by high and low, by young and old, by men and women, without the least attempt at restraint on the part of the priesthood, who are as apt to offend on that score as the worst of their congregation.

And yet this priesthood, which lacks either the power or the will to tame the wild passions of its flock, which never cares to enforce order, silence, or even common decency, in or out of the churches, but rather gives the example of the most shocking irreverence,—this priesthood has known how to invest itself with superhuman authority in the eyes of a grovelling populace, who do not believe in it,

yet dare not die without it; who say and think of the same individual, that "as a man he is a hog, but as a priest he is a god," and never curse or abuse him for his profligacy without a reserve in favour of "the things which he handles."

It seems not a little strange that men of Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon blood should claim brotherhood with such Christians, and that they should recognize such miracles as the bloody vial of St. Januarius or the wanderings of the House of Loreto as part and parcel of their own creed; but far more striking than the Italian's image or relic worship is the Teuton and Anglo-Saxon's Pope worship. The Italians in general, and the Romans especially, have been at all times too freely allowed to peep through the key-holes of the Vatican to harbour any great veneration for the Bishop of Bishops, even when he was compassed all round with the splendour of his temporal sovereignty. They now see and hear too much of the hard fate of the "apostolical prisoner," to share the sympathy with which the sorrows of his captivity inspire men at a distance. Vatican gossip has been and is the daily food of the idlers in Rome, and the Pope's character, stripped of the *prestige* with which Transalpine superstition has invested it, is not even recommendable on the score of consistency or sincerity. There is an atmosphere of lies about the Vatican which taints Infallibility itself. "His Holiness the Pope, Pius IX.," says the Vatican

Chronicle, "enjoys excellent health. Every one observes with wonder and almost stupefaction the florid and robust health of the Holy Father. All his ailings vanished at once, as if he had drawn new life and strength from some mysterious source. He seems rejuvenised and transfigured almost by a miracle. From one year to the other one would say he has gone back into his better days by a full quarter of a century. His bearing is very upright and almost youthful; his eyes are of a brightness which is strikingly set off by his silver hair. His voice is sonorous, and would reach far beyond the Obelisk if at Easter he would again step on St. Peter's balcony and bestow his solemn benediction.

"His appetite," the clerical organ continues, "is very great, and his digestion perfect. Almost every day he goes down for long walks into the Vatican gardens without a cloak, with no other garment than his white robe. He walks fast and briskly, without the aid of a stick, distancing his Cardinals and the rest of his suite. He has never been so joyous, so full of confidence in the approaching restoration of the temporal power. He is incessantly jesting; his conversation sparkles with quips and cranks and lively repartees."

It seems strange to compare this description of the Pope's health and of his daily habits with the lugubrious tone which he assumes before the world on solemn occasions; more strange still to contrast it with the tale of the sudden outbursts of the Pope's

humour, from which his most intimate familiars are not always safe. That the Pope is in good health for a man of his age there is no doubt, and in the opinion of competent medical men he may yet have five or six years to live. What might cause uneasiness is rather the state of his mind; for the human frame often escapes dissolution at the expense of the mental faculties; and there comes a time in which common discretion should warn an old man against a too frequent exhibition of his enfeebled understanding. The Pope's recent speeches have to undergo two or three days' careful revision before they are deemed fit for publication. In many instances, however, the twaddle of an old man does not seem to have gained much by passing through the hands of several old women. It is amusing, for instance, to hear the Pope with perfect gravity anathematize the Freemasons. Because some secret societies have become dangerous in despotic times under proscription, the Pope and the Jesuits about him fret against those wise Governments which know that such associations can best be rendered harmless by wise toleration. In spite of all the serpentine cunning with which these Vatican politicians are credited, their childish ingenuousness and their ignorance of the ways of the world exceed all belief. The Pope seems really to labour under some hallucination which makes him ascribe all the mischief he sees in the world to Masonic influence. The burly King who has made himself at home in the

Quirinal is, in the Pontiff's eyes, nothing but a big Carbonaro. The temporal power, in the opinion of Pius IX., has been overthrown by "Young Italy"; not as most men would interpret that expression, through the natural aspirations of a long-trodden nation to better destinies, but by the tenebrous work of that Mazzinian fraternity which certainly never won Solferino or Sadowa, or even poor Castelfidardo. At all times during his twenty-eight years' reign Pope Pius IX. has shown himself a flagrantly unpractical man. It would hardly be possible to recall another Pontificate fraught with greater disaster and ruin to the Church, or one in which misfortune could be more immediately referred to the incapacity of its head. The Pope started with the notion of the perfect compatibility of civil liberty with ecclesiastical authority, and he ends by a conviction of the necessity of placing ecclesiastical authority over civil liberty. The first mistake led him to Gaeta; the second is now involving him in Church and State quarrels which have deprived him of all earthly support. It is but justice to the Pope to say that he cares not for such support. His faith is in himself, or in Providence, with which he identifies himself. It is not his permanent *entourage* that misleads him; for every possible hint which could be conveyed to the Holy Father compatibly with the respect due to his station, in the hope of bringing him to hold his tongue, has been tried and tried in vain. Antonelli, himself

a shrewd, reticent man, has set the doctors at the Pope, and endeavoured to inspire him with some fear about the consequences to his health of this exuberant eloquence. But the Pope is not to be reasoned with. He is a strong-willed man, the incarnation of vanity and obstinacy. Pius IX. is as much in love with his own voice as Pius VI. was with his handsome face and person. What turns the feeble old man's head is the flattery of the Ultramontanes. The fault rests with the crowds of visitors from all quarters of the world, the adoration with which they surround him, the millions of francs in Peter's Pence which they lay at his feet: it is the incense which all nations burn at his altar that seems to get into the Pope's head, and to encourage him in his fondest conceits. Because all the weak-minded are with him, he thinks that the strength of the world is with him. But weakness, however prevalent, will not easily become strength. Napoleon III. was in the Pope's imagination a strong tower; so was Francis Joseph of Austria; and Pius IX. leaned now on one, now on another of those monarchs, turned from one to the other, and even set one against the other, till every prop broke under him. When France was under a cloud, and Austria, in the Pope's opinion, revolutionized, he looked to the Legitimist ranks of Chambord or Don Carlos for his champions. It is only when those pretenders fail that Pius IX. declares that his faith is not, and had never been, in princes; that his

power lies in his clergy, in the German and Swiss bishops, and even more than in the priests, in the whole flock of the faithful, not merely among those Latin races which, as he asserts, never strayed from the fold, but also and especially among those Teuton, Anglo-Saxon and other Northern prodigals, whom repentance is bringing back to their father's arms, and for whose welcome the fatted calf is to be killed. The eagerness with which Protestants from all countries, and especially from England and America, press forward in the Vatican antechambers, suing for the honour of kissing the cross on the Pope's slipper, has a bewildering and almost intoxicating effect on the aged Pontiff's imagination, who is incapable of referring that ardent desire to see him to mere silly curiosity, but attributes it to real veneration for his office as well as for his person, and who twaddles about the "Isle of the Saints" and the "*Non Angli sed Angeli*," till he almost realizes the expectation held out to him on the promulgation of Cardinal Wiseman's Bull from the Flaminian Gate, that "Mass should again be celebrated at the main altar of Westminster Abbey."

It is interesting to observe how thoroughly Cismontanes and Ultramontanes have exchanged their parts since the adjournment of the Œcumenical Council in 1870. At the time of his accession to the Pontificate, in 1846, Giovanni Mastai Ferretti himself was no Ultramontane. He called down "Heaven's blessings on Italy," and

his fondest dream was to see his native country promoted to the first rank among nations, according to the plan sketched out by Gioberti, based on a Confederacy of liberal princes, with a liberal Pope and his hierarchy at its head. Foreign Catholics, or Ultramontanes, had then no sympathy with that Italian principality which gave Catholicism its peculiar local character to the great detriment of its universal aspirations. Had they had a choice in the matter they might have wished that the See of Rome, by resigning its temporal power, should be placed on the same footing with other ecclesiastical communities, where bishops and mitred abbots had laid aside their feudal, princely, and electoral rank, in tacit and more or less spontaneous acknowledgment of the doctrine that "the kingdom of the Vicars of Christ was not to be of this world." Had the liberal views of Pius IX., in 1846, been realizable, the result would have been either the conversion of the whole world to Romanism, or the secession from it of all nations, and the reduction of the Papacy to a mere Italian diocese. But that was not to be. The Italians soon perceived that the Pope's cause was not at all their cause; that it was their enemies' cause. And when by great adroitness and still greater good fortune they had triumphed over their enemies, they turned against the Pope, and overran his territory and broke his sceptre with a facility and a unanimity which proved that his temporal power was no part of the

creed even of the oldest, most prejudiced and most bigoted among them. Pius IX., who saw that the Italians, unable to make him their instrument, were bent on breaking him, looked for rescue beyond the Alps, and endeavoured to rally the pious of all countries around him by those canonizations of saints and inventions of new dogmas which simply lowered and degraded the faith they were intended to revive. At last either he, or some of his advisers more shrewd than the rest, hit upon those capital schemes of the Œcumenical Council and the dogma of Infallibility. Even these would have found little favour either in or out of Italy had not the meeting at the Vatican coincided with events which changed the map of Europe, and enlisted political interests in behalf of the religious movement. And just as the Italians entered Rome, the Council and the dogma became a new watch-word for the Papacy, a war-cry which was to vindicate not only the Pope's sovereign rights upon Rome, but also the ascendency of the Ecclesiastical over the Civil authority.

Of these sanguine people who still cherish the illusion of a possible restoration of the Holy See to its earthly sovereignty, and thereby of its re-assertion of absolute supremacy over all nations, by far the greatest number are Transalpine, and must be sought among those Teutonic and Anglo-Saxon races which broke from Rome in the sixteenth century, and to which her sayings and doings have

been a sealed book ever since. Those who never strayed from the fold, at least those who were kept within it by main force, the Italians, and chiefly the Romans, can be no Ultramontanes. To them the Papal system seems and has always seemed a mass of rotteness, which nothing but an overbearing extraneous force has for many years enabled to escape dissolution. There is positively no man in Italy, Cardinal Antonelli himself not excepted, who does not look upon the quarrel between the Vatican and the Quirinal, between the Church and the nation, as definitively and irrevocably settled, so far as Italy herself is concerned. There is no one among the former subjects of the Pope, even among those *sbirri*, spies, and other pensioned officials who gather in the piazza of St. Peter's to cry "*Viva il Papa-Re!*"—who harbours the least faith in any chance of a re-establishment of a Pope-King, so far as it is to be effected by Italian means. Those Roman princes, children or grand-children of Popes, whose greatness sprang from Popes and was identified with them, who so long looked upon themselves as the pillars of the Church, and whose interests were bound up with the old system, know very well how helpless they were to avert its downfall, and how powerless their own efforts would now be to reconstruct it. A puny, priest-ridden race, they had not a sword to uphold, not a voice to warn, no energy or resolution to control the priestly Government. Whatever reason they

may have to regret it for themselves, they must feel that as they did nothing to entitle the Papacy to live, they have no right to survive it.

The hope of the Papal party in Italy, be it lay or clerical, rests exclusively on foreign aid, and it is this reliance on Transalpine interference, this determination that Italy shall perish in order that Papal Rome may live, which calls down on that party the execration of the whole country; it is that which in peaceful times estranges the people not only from the clergy, but also from the religion they teach, and which in a warlike crisis, were any to arise, would expose the priesthood to some outbreak of popular fury, and give a political contest all the animosity of a religious feud.

The language of the clerical press throughout the Peninsula, echoed in the sermons of the priests, especially in rural districts, is rash and provocative beyond all limits of discretion. The clergy seem everywhere bent on creating riot and disturbance. There is something absolutely fiendish in the exultation with which these men of God, these ministers of a gospel of peace, hail the "coming avenger," revelling in the fancied approach of foreign armies by which their country is to be ravaged and laid waste, its national unity to be dissolved, and all the calamities of division and misrule ushered in to restore the reign of the disciple of that Master whose "kingdom was not of this world." The evil of all is the good of the

priest, and his revengeful feelings can only be assuaged by the anticipation of the common misery.

For their own part the people, even those who profess themselves earnest Catholics, reciprocate the animosity which their priests are at so little pains to conceal. One of the oldest Deputies in the Italian Chamber, a moderate politician, was heard the other day at a public meeting upbraiding the clericals for the blindness with which they look to foreign aid for the overthrow of the present order of things. "Whatever," he said, "may be the result of a conflict between France and Italy, of one thing we may be sure—that the declaration of such a war would be the signal for a massacre of all the priests in the country." These words were eagerly quoted in every journal through the Peninsula, the most temperate of which observed that "even if such a slaughter were not the result of the long-pent-up rage of the populace under intolerable provocation, it would be prompted as a matter of policy, by the necessity of securing from the attacks of domestic enemies the backs of combatants engaged in defending the frontier against a foreign foe."

What Ultramontanism, what the zeal of the two hundred millions of Transalpine Catholics will ever do for the Pope, is not very clear, but the hope built on such aid by the Papal party is very strong. They see season after season the Roman hotels and boarding-houses crowded with devotees from all

parts of the world. The number of persons suing for admission to the Pope's presence on the occasion of any of those anniversaries which have been multiplied till they go from April to September, is often so great that one day's reception has to be followed by the morrow's *levée*, and the soundness of the aged Pontiff's lungs is tested by the delivery of endless speeches. It is not easy to give interest to such ever-recurring ceremonies or to avoid repetition; but as the audience is ever new, the action on the stage, however old, seems to strike no one as stale.

Whatever flattering unction these performances may administer to the Pope's vanity, their sameness would pall even upon himself were it not for the offering of Peter's Pence, which is the almost invariable wind-up to the solemnity. If there were truth in the saying that "Money is power," the Holy Father would doubtless be the mightiest potentate, seeing that his personal expenses are trifling, and that the enormous wealth the faithful place at his disposal could all be devoted to the extension of his spiritual authority and the eventual recovery of his temporal power. That money however, even if a large portion of it were not absorbed by the expenses of the Papal household, of the Sacred College, and of many members of the Italian Episcopate, would represent not the strength, but the weakness of the Pontifical cause. Were there among the supporters of the Pope-King men of

character still disposed to look upon his restoration as a not altogether hopeless enterprise, surely they would urge the expediency of husbanding those sinews of war which the Court of the Vatican is now so recklessly squandering in idle demonstrations and bootless intrigues. But the mainstay of the Papacy rests on the attachment of a feeble multitude, proverbially ready to part with their money, and unable to apply it to the purposes it might be made to answer—a multitude in which the helpless sex greatly preponderates, in which converts outnumber the old votaries, and zeal gains intensity from distance and ignorance.

The Papal party in short looks to Ultramontanism for a rescue. With pecuniary resources of an unlimited extent, they think that there are legions of Pontifical Zouaves and other volunteers to be had whose impatience can hardly be controlled. The phenomenon of the swarm of pilgrims crowding round long-forgotten shrines in and out of season in France has spread to other countries, and every road now trodden by palmers from England and America leads to Rome. Next year, 1875, we shall have the Jubilee, and those who remember 1825 are aware of the madness which seizes the masses at similar times, and brings them in long processions to every imaginable sanctuary, and especially to those which hallow almost every square foot of the soil of the Papal City. The pilgrimages to La Valette, to Lourdes, to Loreto,

to Oropa, have been, the Pope's friend's hope, only a prelude to the rush to Rome in the Holy Year. What, they ask, will the Italian Government do, when hundreds of thousands come down upon them across the Alps in long excursion trains, when they throng every street in Rome, and, they might add, treat her people with that arrogance of which the present visitors of the Vatican give frequent examples? A pilgrimage may supply the pretext for a crusade. Let only a new Peter the Hermit—say, a Dupanloup—raise the old cry, "*Dieu le veult!*" and pent-up political animosities may be mixed up with religious rancours, and we shall have, they perhaps flatter themselves, improvised armies for the deliverance of Rome, as the Middle Ages had disorderly hosts for the liberation of Jerusalem.

Of such a nature are the delusions with which Ultramontanism flatters the Court of the Vatican. The Pope and his priests are sure of a Papal party in every community. They look upon every pilgrim as a possible crusader; they take the flow of Peter's Pence as evidence of a latent power which may at any time sway the councils of the European States, and give religious fanaticism the upper hand over political calculation. So long as Pius IX. lives Ultramontanism will show no sign of a disposition to give up the game. The energetic measures resorted to in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Russia to resist the over-weening pretensions of the clergy, far from awing or sobering the Papal

Council, only inspire it with fresh arrogance and assurance. The situation seems to the Pope and the people about him by no means more desperate that that of Pius VI. at Savona, in 1800, or of Pius VII. at Fontainebleau, in 1814. The Italian Government, in Papal conceit, is not so redoubtable an enemy as the Directory of the first French Republic. Prince Bismarck is a far less invulnerable potentate than the first Napoleon. "St. Peter's bark," they say, "has weathered many storms; it will go safely through the present tempest." Were even the two hundred millions of Catholics to fail him, the Pope might reckon on his enemies as well as on his friends. Was not Pius VII. in 1800 elected under the protection of English heretics, Russian schismatics, and Turkish Mahometans? and was not the present Pope himself brought back in triumph from Gaeta in 1849 by that same Louis Napoleon who had borne arms against his predecessor in 1831?

CHAPTER X.

FRANCE AND ITALY.

France and Ultramontanism—French Policy towards Italy—French Religious Revival—Religion and Conservatism—French Priests: the Archbishop of Paris—French Priests in Rome—De La Haye's Burial—Ultramontanism and Chauvinism.

WERE Italy an island far away in mid-ocean, or were she surrounded by countries amenable to the rule of stable governments, her quarrel with the Pope and his priesthood, although still open, might be looked upon as hushed up. The Pope, as we have seen, looks abroad for the redress of his wrongs. But even beyond the Alps his friends among the European States are greatly outnumbered by his enemies. Ultramontanism is dreaded and abhorred wherever there is a settled Government—except perhaps in Belgium. And the war which the Church has to wage against the State in Germany, Switzerland, and other communities may end much more fatally for her spiritual dominion than her hollow yet perpetual truce with Italy for her temporal interests.

There is only one country where political views to a great extent favour Ultramontane aspirations,

and that is France—a country actually with a nameless Government, a Government with no distinct purpose of present or future existence. France does not love Italy. She deems herself deeply aggrieved by her newly-emancipated neighbour, and it would be unjust to deny that she has some ground for her displeasure. The Italians are in Rome without her permission; they are in Rome against her will, in despite of her absolute "Never!" and, what is more, in open violation of their solemn engagements to her. Italian statesmen sadly blundered when they signed the Convention of September, 1864; they erred more deplorably when they consented to renew that compact after it had been broken on all sides at Mentana in 1867; but that compact was most certainly binding upon them in 1870, and they as certainly would never have gone from it had not France's difficulty proved Italy's opportunity.

The overthrow of a theocracy which the Eldest Daughter of the Church considered her handiwork was in itself a great outrage. Yet it is not every Frenchman who at that juncture would have sympathized with the cry of anguish which bigotry wrenched from the heart of the Empress Eugénie, "Rather the Prussians in Paris than the Italians in Rome." But the occupation of Rome by Cadorna's *Bersaglieri* completed that work of Italian unity to which every man in France objected, and which no man, except, perhaps, the Emperor Napoleon,

would have tolerated, had it not been for that untoward circumstance of the presence of the Prussians in or about Paris. Since those fatal days of 1870, Italy and Prussia have always been associated in the minds of most Frenchmen as objects of equal animosity, with this difference, that France must, however reluctantly, avow herself conquered by Prussia, whereas she only considers herself outwitted by Italy.

Nothing could have been more ungracious, consequently nothing more unwise, than the manner in which France recognized the Italian Government after the transfer of its seat to Rome. Even that poor drivelling M. Jules Favre quibbled and maundered about "reserving the right and freedom of action of France." Then followed M. Thiers, that embodiment of French *chauvinisme*, accepting *faits accomplis*, yet giving the Italians to understand that they were only in Rome on sufferance. Even when he appeared at Florence as a suppliant for Italian aid, the testy old man had the frankness, if not the tact, to declare himself the most hearty and open enemy of Italian unity. It was united Italy, he fancied, that had suggested the notion of a united Germany. It was only the weakness, not the good-will of France, he thought, that should ever consent to a transaction tending to strengthen any of her neighbours. Had only France been strong enough—but no! with the Germans beleaguering Paris, France was not in

a position to bite, and it was idle for her to bark.

The utterance M. Thiers gave to his thoughts in his conversation with the Ministers of King Victor Emmanuel in Florence was a programme followed by every act of the French Government during his three years' Presidency; and the policy thus traced out by him has been, from necessity as much as from choice, taken as their guidance by all his successors. There is no petty diplomatic slight, no deliberate annoyance, no prick of the pin, that France has not resorted to in her desire to convey the sense of her ill-will to Italy, from her attempt to mine the entrance of the Mont Cenis Tunnel, to her closing the garden of the French Academy at the Villa Medici to the promenaders on the Pincio.

There is nothing new in the attitude now assumed by France towards Germany and Italy. The old quarrel of Guelphs and Ghibelines is distracting those two countries, and France finds it for her interest to associate her own cause with that of the Pope. All the attachment of her people to that cause is not the result of unreasoning zeal. The revival of what is called "religion" in that country, the crowding of pilgrims at miraculous shrines, the unbounded ascendency of the priesthood, and the rampant audacity of the clerical press, are not matters of recent date. The power of the clergy had been rapidly growing under Imperial favour, and fanaticism reached its highest pitch during

the last desperate struggle after Sedan, when Bishop Dupanloup blessed the standards of the Gardes Mobiles at Orleans, and the Pontifical Zouaves rushed upon the German bayonets as martyrs, while the craven Republican "Free Shooters" hung back sneering at the *Calotins qui allaient se faire tuer.* Since then the cry "*Sauvons Rome et la France*" (it is always so with the Ultramontanes: the Pope before everything else: French, if you please, but Catholic first) has found an echo even in the hearts of those *Voraces* of Lyons and Marseilles who had once no other God than Gambetta, and the *Sacré Cœur* has become the war-badge of the *Voyous* as well as of the "Sons of the Crusaders."

It has always struck the Italians throughout this melancholy crisis that all the wrangling between the French and themselves about the Papal question merely arose from a hasty original misconception. The French chose to look upon the occupation of Rome by Italy as an act hostile to themselves, a mishap immediately connected with the disaster of Sedan; the Italians, as it were, stabbing France in the back at the very moment she succumbed to the onset of Germany. But how easy it would have been to represent the event as quite the reverse of all that. Sedan had overthrown the Empire, and France showed the utmost anxiety to disavow it. Why then not disavow also that false position of the Empire at Rome which was the result of the most egregious, unpardonable Imperial blunders?

Instead of looking upon the storming of Porto Pia as an insult done to France, why should not France have been taught to be proud of it? In the midst of their humiliation, in the hour of defeat, the French might have been made to exult at the achievement of their Italian brethren. "We have lost two fine provinces, it is true," they might have said; "but we are rid of Cæsarism and of its works, and our very catastrophe has determined the end of an old edifice of error and tyranny which had been an incubus on mankind for centuries. Thus the very defeat of the French nation advances the interests of human progress. It was not Italy that overthrew the Papacy; it was France in her wisdom allowing and applauding the demolition of a crazy old structure which she had raised in her folly." France could have had the honour of the change of which Italy had the benefit.

It is thus that the Italians reasoned, and their arguments would have been correct, if, as they and all the world believed, it had been Gambetta and the Revolution that really triumphed in France after Sedan. But in spite of the results of nearly every appeal to universal suffrage, it is now manifest that it was Conservatism and even blind reaction that set in in France after 1870. Gambetta had his own day and so had the Commune. But from the Red to the White Terror the transition was almost instantaneous. France looked for a Saviour of Society to Chambord, to an Orleans, and even to

a new Bonaparte. She acquiesced in a Republic, in a Septennate, in anything that would call itself Conservative, that would uphold order and authority, that would disavow the Revolution. The Revolution had not in this instance been beneficial to France; the Map of Europe had not been modified to her advantage. Hence her revulsion of feelings in behalf of the Throne and Altar. The throne is still waiting for an occupant; but till the King or Emperor be forthcoming, the Priest rules supreme.

No better proof need be asked of the domineering attitude assumed by the clergy in France than the language they indulge in whenever any allusion to Italy occurs. The Italians, who submit to every outburst of peevish temper on the part of the old Pope, have hardly endurance enough to put up with the arrogance of his foreign, and especially of his French, champions. Among others, the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Guibert, now a Cardinal, year after year seeks every opportunity to give offence. Instead of preaching to the French, that Prelate chooses to preach at the Italians. He stigmatizes the occupation of Rome as the most audacious violation of the conditions essential to the existence of the Christian world, as the darkest outrage against religion and society. He upbraids the European powers for their remissness in allowing the perpetration of such a sacrilege, and threatens them with the punishment with which they will themselves one day be visited. "Revolution," he

says, "will overwhelm the world, and God will know how to create a new order out of its chaos and ruin." The Archbishop sees only one way of preventing all this, and that is that Italy should repent in sackcloth and ashes and go back of her own accord to the former state of things. "She had better abandon spontaneously that Papal territory which the invincible power of honest men cannot fail one day to wrest from her. By limiting and chastening her ambition in that respect, by giving up Rome and the patrimony, Italy will be enabled to secure all her other conquests, and nothing will prevent her development as a great and happy country."

These outpourings of priestly wrath are read with extreme bitterness throughout Italy. Half-penny papers translate the Archbishop's pastorals or the addresses of the Bishops of Angers, of Nantes and others; and the running comments one may hear upon them in every *café* are not without interest.

"Why cannot Cardinal Guibert and his priests mind their own business?" I hear people saying. "Why do they not address themselves to those gentle sheep in their flock—the *scanna-preti* (priest-slayers), to whom three of Guibert's own predecessors and so many of his clergy so lately fell victims?

"Are we to be made to give up church property? By all means; but have not Cardinal Guibert's

own countrymen stolen goods of that kind in their possession? If restitution is to be made to the Pope why not begin with Avignon?

"Is it not amusing to hear these French prelates upbraid us with covetousness, and admonish us to moderate our ambition? Are we not satisfied with our own? or do we even grudge France what was and ought to be our own? Are not Savoy and Nice some compensation to France for the loss of Alsace and Lorraine? and could we not have recovered those provinces if we had listened to Bismarck's suggestions and joined him in a war to which France's treatment of us at Venice and in Rome had only too clearly provoked us?"

There is nothing perhaps that so strongly indisposes the Italians against the French as the readiness with which these latter have, in their adversity, bowed the neck under that priestly yoke which in better times they have been so anxious to shake off from the neck of all mankind. "Are these," the Italians say, "the disciples of Volney and Voltaire? Is the Encyclopédie to be beaten off the field by the new gospel of La Salette and Lourdes?" And as the people in this country are unable to make due allowance for the mobility of the French character, as they cannot accept as genuine a fanaticism and superstition of which they could not themselves be capable, they look upon it as a mere symptom

of ill-disguised political resentment, and think France's outcry for the Pope has no other aim than a virtual protest against "accomplished facts" and "a reservation of her right" to the eventual disruption of Italian unity.

King John, or indeed the England of Queen Elizabeth, speaking through Shakspeare, said that one could not "devise a name so slight, unworthy, and ridiculous as the Pope." All Italians do not carry their irreverence towards the head of their religion so far as that, but there is no word that more nettles, sickens, and drives them out of all patience than the new-fangled word "Pope-King"; and yet this cry, "*Viva il Papa-Re!*" which was never heard in Rome so long as the Pope did reign, is taken up everywhere abroad, and especially in France, by ex-Zouaves and other Pontifical partisans, now that the Pope has ceased to reign, and that clamour can only be meant as defiance to the new sovereign in Rome,—now, when "Long live the Pope-King!" can only be interpreted as "Death to Italy!"

There is something in the high rank and in the personal character of the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris that gives his diatribes a decided political weight, as it convinces the Italians that this prelate would scarcely allow himself expressions so offensive to a neighbouring nation, if his language did not find an echo in the hearts of many of his flock, and of the men at the head of France. They wonder

what the French Government would say if an Italian preacher of high rank—say the Archbishop of Milan—were to interlard his sermons with such scraps of *café* conversation as I have just been condensing. France may consider herself entitled to use her privilege as the stronger power, but she cannot expect to win the sympathies of a sister "Latin" race by the abuse of that privilege.

A proof of the lengths to which French priests carry their animosity against Italy may be seen in the "blunder worse than a crime" which they committed in refusing Christian burial to one of their own countrymen, simply because the Italians were anxious to do honour to his remains. Colonel De La Haye, a military *attaché* to the French Legation accredited to the Court of King Victor Emmanuel (no connexion with the French Embassy accredited to the Court of Pope Pius IX.), was struck by sudden death on the 25th of December, 1873. This distinguished French officer had fought with valour for the cause of Italy at Magenta and Solferino in 1859, and had won the esteem and friendship of the people among whom he lived in his official capacity since 1868. His Italian friends heard that, by the desire of his widow, the body of the departed was to be conveyed for burial to France, but that a funeral Mass was to be said or sung over it in San Luigi dei Francesi, which has been from time immemorial the official church of the French nation; and partly by spontaneous impulse, partly in

obedience to the orders of the Minister of War, a certain number of Italian officers of rank prepared to attend the last rites performed in honour of one who had been their companion in arms, and who was in Rome as representative of the French Army. Italy, by the presence of Prince Humbert, the heir of the throne, and by that of the *élite* of her own army, wished to honour France in the person of her deceased soldier; she wished to give the nation to which she was indebted for Magenta and Solferino a proof of her gratitude by mourning over the loss of one who had shed his blood in those fields, and who had at a later period, in his official capacity, attended the international religious services by which the Ossuaries in those fields were consecrated. The French priests, however, declared that "the Italian Government intended to avail itself of the celebration of those funeral obsequies for a clamorous political demonstration, and that their place of worship was threatened with desecration." But how could so simple and so natural a show of respect to the man, and of good-will to the people to whom he belonged, have become an occasion for unseemly disturbance? How could the presence of a prince of the blood and of a staff of his officers, although excommunicated, have interfered with the sacredness of the mournful solemnity? The real fact is, on the contrary, that such a transaction might have been a means of promoting friendly feelings between two nations which late

events have estranged, and this is precisely what did not suit the French priests. In their blind rancour, they only thought how they could affront the Italians; they did not consider how far more deeply they wounded the susceptibilities of their own countrymen. Reverence for the dead is one of the best and most deeply-marked features in the French character, as one may discern in the readiness with which even the most sceptical and most abandoned among the Paris populace will uncover their heads before a coffin, even when they allow a cross to pass by without any other notice than a sneer. The interruption of a funeral procession has more than once been made in the Boulevards the cause or pretext for a riot, often with fatal results to the Government ill-advised enough to wound the people's feelings in that tenderest point. The priests, who boast of having themselves implanted and fostered that honourable sentiment, ought to be aware of its existence, and to perceive the utter madness of allowing any worldly consideration, and especially any political animosity, to shock it. Had the Italians, for their own part, been equally inhuman, unforgiving, and un-Christian, had they denied even a temporary resting-place to the deceased in one of their own churches, and sent back to France the body of her gallant soldier, "unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd," along with other parcels in a railway truck, the clerical sowers of discord between the two nations would have

obtained their intent. But the Italians, be it said to their eternal honour, know how to keep their temper under provocation. The funeral was solemnized in their own church of San Marcello al Corso; it came off with all the lustre that both a religious and a military display could give it. It was honoured by the presence of all that was distinguished, all that was great and good in the land, and I need hardly say that there was neither disturbance nor clamorous political demonstration, and that it would be impossible to imagine a more decorous or more creditable behaviour than that of the Roman multitude assembled at San Marcello on this occasion.

The priests of San Luigi dei Francesi soon saw the enormity of their own deed, and endeavoured to shift the odium of their ungenerous measure from their own shoulders on to those of the French Ambassador, M. De Corcelles, from whom, they say, the orders to close their doors against the body of his own countrymen emanated. And it is true not only that the thought first sprang up in M. De Corcelles's brain, but that this distinguished diplomatist went about asking advice as to what was to be done, and that after being warned not to do the deed he meditated, he ended by following the promptings of his own heart or his wish to please the Pope at any cost, and doing it, regardless of the wound he inflicted on the feelings of his countrymen. But it seems that

the gravity of his offence struck even himself, as he attempted, when it was too late, to repair his error, by appearing, though in plain clothes and incognito, in the Church of San Marcello, thus dissociating his person from his office, and doing private homage to the dead on whom he had inflicted a public slur.

I should not have dwelt with so great a minuteness on the particulars of this petty scandal were it not that it shows the extent to which the priesthood in France indulge their own sympathies and antipathies, indifferent to any blame they may incur, either on the part of their Government or of their less frantically-bigoted countrymen. In Rome it was fully expected that the Ambassador who had been guilty of so absurd an excess of zeal would be disavowed and reprimanded at least, if not actually recalled. It was expected that the incident would become the subject of an interpellation in the Versailles Assembly, and that Marshal MacMahon could not be indifferent to the outrage offered to the body of a former comrade; but nothing of all that occurred. The priests had it all their own way, and, more consistent in their conduct than the Ambassador, when the body of De La Haye, driven from the doors of San Luigi, found a refuge at San Marcello, they —more than sixty of them resident in Rome—with the single exception of Father Trullet, absented themselves from the sacred building.

All that can be gathered from the conduct of France towards Italy is, in short, that there is Sedan to be avenged, and although the Italians had no hand in that battle, they benefited by it almost to a greater extent than the victorious Germans, and inflicted on France an affront harder for her to bear than an injury. To dissociate the cause of Italy from that of Germany, or to attack one country without alarming the other, would not be easy. But France has not given up the idea that it may be possible for her to fall suddenly on the weaker power, and strike a damaging blow ere her stronger adversary summons up sufficient resolution to come to the rescue. The French territory is now rid of the German invaders; the finances of the thriving country give satisfactory results; the army has attained a high degree of efficiency, and French military men entertain no great opinion of the fighting powers of their Italian neighbours. What can be easier than to induce France to take the field for an idea? She would draw the sword in a holy cause; she would punish Italian ingratitude; avenge the insult that she declares the storming of Porta Pia, on the 20th of September, 1870, put upon her. The policy of the Thiers school—that policy which bases the strength of France on her neighbours' weakness—would be in perfect accord with the enthusiasm of the Guibert and Dupanloup faction—that enthusiasm which calls it piety to slaughter men for a priest's benefit. Only let an

opportunity present itself, and France would fall "like one man" on those devoted Subalpine plains, which have been since Charles VIII. the field of glory and the grave of the restless descendant of the Gaul. There is a new Longobardic kingdom to be broken up; a new Desiderius to be conveyed in chains to a French dungeon; a new Leo III. ready to bless and to crown a new Charlemagne, and, as in the ninth century, there is a host of priests and a multitude of rural serfs led by them in the country which is to be invaded, burning to rise against their own unbelieving rulers and to make common cause with their foreign deliverers.

It would be idle to deny that many persons in Italy are haunted by such misgivings. To be sure, France would, in all contingencies, have to settle accounts with Bismarck. But no one can say how in a general warlike outbreak the alliances of the great European Powers would fall out; and at any rate Italy must feel that it behoves her as an independent State to rely on her own means for defence. She may have little to fear from France and little from Ultramontanism; but what if she were to bring both these enemies simultaneously upon herself? She is told that there are beyond the Alps two hundred millions of Catholics, fourteen or fifteen millions of them in that very German Empire on which she must lean as on her most useful ally. What if France found it expedient to make common cause with Ultramontanism; to

place herself at the head of the two hundred million Catholics; to raise the standard of Guelphism against Italo-German Ghibellinism; to proclaim a crusade in behalf of the "Pope-King" all over the world? What may turn up in France any day is beyond any man's calculation, and the only thing that is certain is that safety from attack must be sought by Italy, as by any other country, in its preparation for defence.

CHAPTER XI.

ITALY AND GERMANY.

The King's Journey—Bismarck and La Marmora—Position of Affairs in 1866—Napoleon's Policy—Embarrassment of Italy before the War—During and after the War—Italian and German Views of the Papal Question—The only Policy for Italy.

WHAT was the object of the statesmen of King Victor Emmanuel, when in the autumn of last year they advised that sovereign's journey to Vienna and Berlin?

The thought certainly never sprang up spontaneously in the mind of the King himself. He had just patched up a Ministerial crisis which had unexpectedly summoned him from Moncalieri to the Pitti Palace, and had betaken himself to the wilds of Val Savaranche with a schoolboy's alacrity in pursuit of his vacation pastimes. His new Ministers were all away at their bathing places, and they also seemed to have made up their minds that business should not for a few weeks interfere with pleasure.

It so happens however that in our days sovereigns and statesmen propose and people dispose.

The Italian people heard that a courteous message had reached Rome by which the "chivalrous Emperor" Francis Joseph asked the bluff "King Honest-man" to honour with his presence the Vienna Exhibition. The King and his Ministers were for thanking and declining; but the people "resolved" that the invitation should be accepted in the same friendly spirit in which it was tendered. The press of all colours took possession of the subject. The matter was discussed, made much of, kept alive, tossed about like a ball, till it became the one great topic of the day—an affair of State, and it was full time it should engage the holiday-making statesmen's attention.

The King laid aside his rifle and came down from the hills. He travelled from Aosta to Turin, and thence to Florence, where he closeted himself with his Ministers, to deliberate on the momentous question—"To go or not to go."

The King himself expressed great reluctance: "Courtly fuss, crowded rooms, demonstrations, ovations"—things he detests, of which he has more than enough at home; but his personal inconvenience was the least objection. Towards the Emperor of Austria and his family—especially towards the Archduke Albert, who had beaten him at Custozza—he entertained the warmest feelings of friendship. But, somehow, there must be something awkward in meeting those Habsburg-Lorraine Princes: "Imperial cousins on his mother's and his wife's side—

three times at war with them, and he now in possession of what they considered the brightest gem in the Austrian diadem—in possession of those palaces of Milan and Monza, so long the residence of his father-in-law and brothers-in-law, the Archduke Rainer's family."

"Sovereigns," the man of good sterling sense argued, "look on these matters from a different point of view from their subjects. For them kingdoms are so much landed property, yielding so much revenue, and they hardly sympathize with that feeling of nationality which enriches a neighbour at their expense. A king must stick to his kingship—and *quod tibi non vis.*"

"But a king must also be a politician, sire," Minghetti adroitly insinuated. "Bygones must be bygones and Austria is aware that what cannot be cured must be endured. Consider, your Majesty! The ultimate goal of this journey is not the Vienna Exhibition. From the Danube you will be expected to proceed to the Spree. A visit of reconciliation to your late enemies at Vienna will lead to one of congratulation with your allies at Berlin.

"Allow me to cap your Latin with other Latin. *Sæpe premente Deo fert Deus alter opem.* You see how France treats us. We have obtained all our hearts' desire; what we ask is simply to be at peace with the whole world. But what peace is granted to us? A jealous, rancorous peace, and

worst of all an armed peace. We give no offence; we put up with pointed insult and studied arrogance; with M. De Corcelles at the Colonna Palace and the Orinoque at Civita Vecchia. We have given our neighbours every imaginable pledge of our pacific intentions; but can we be easy on the score of our neighbours' intentions?

"We can be at no loss as to where to look for enemies; but are we equally sure where friends are to be found? Danger threatens from the West; should we not rely for support on the East and North? We have settled all disputes with Austria; we are on the best terms with Germany. Your Majesty knows the result of last year's meeting of the Three Emperors. Three great empires are bent on exerting all their influence in the interest of European peace. What can be the purpose of your intended journey except that of adding Italy as a member to the Northern Peace-League?

"Europe is divided into two camps, with the Ultramontanes on one side and the friends of freedom on the other. If France chooses to assume the leadership of the former, should not Italy be found in the ranks of the latter?

"So long as France harbours no hostile designs our policy is fair and strict neutrality. But if she drives us from it what have we to fall back upon except a German alliance?"

The Minister's argument admitted no answer, and the King's journey was resolved upon. Yet

that very journey proved how hollow the argument was. It so happened that the King's journey coincided with La Marmora's publication on the Political and Military Events of 1866, the year in which Italy fought at Custozza in Lombardy and Prussia at Sadowa in Bohemia. That unfortunate book, as well as the comments to which it gave rise, showed how easy it was for Prussia and Italy, as it is for other countries, to begin a campaign as confederates and end it as lukewarm friends.

Between the *Tedeschi* on one side and the *Waelsche* on the other there never was much love lost. The alliance between the two countries in 1866 was unnatural and repugnant to the feelings of the two nations, and it was only imposed upon them by common interests. The negotiations which led to it, and the military operations which ensued from it, gave rise to endless mutual suspicions, reproaches and recriminations, of which La Marmora's ill-timed and ill-judged apology was only the after-stroke. No man can sympathize with the morbid and perverse feeling which prompted the vanquished of Custozza to rake up old grievances, and to try to account for unpardonable blunders by a defence worse than the offence itself. But on the other hand nothing could justify Prince Bismarck's attacks both upon La Marmora himself and upon Govone, his agent throughout those transactions, and the assurance with which the German Chancellor and his official

press stigmatized the documents published in La Marmora's book as "forgeries from beginning to end." As the misunderstandings which arose at that juncture may reproduce themselves on any future occasion in which the two countries may again have to go hand-in-hand in pursuance of a common object, it may perhaps be worth while to recall the main points of the controversy to which Italian susceptibility conspired with German rudeness to give so peculiar a bitterness.

The position of affairs in Europe at the epoch referred to in La Marmora's work was sufficiently clear. There was south of the Alps an Italian kingdom which France hoped to exclude for ever from its capital, and in one of the fairest provinces of which Austria still stood in arms, entrenched behind those formidable four citadels which had defied the onset of the conquerors of Solferino. Garibaldi had gone back to Caprera after Aspromonte, an older if not a wiser man, and the cry, "*Roma e Venezia!*" had in a great measure died away among the disheartened Italian multitude. North of the Alps there were two great Powers—Prussia and Austria—contending for ascendency in the German Confederacy, and they had been on the brink of open hostilities in 1850, but were supposed to be equally incapable either of patching up their quarrel or of fighting it out. They had just come back from their easy campaign against Denmark, which had not only added two provinces to the

Frankfort Bund, but had also utterly crushed the fidgety ambition, and annihilated the self-assumed importance of the minor States in that body, and thus placed the two great competitors for German supremacy face to face. Between Italy which longed to wrest Venice from Austria, and Prussia which wished to oust Austria from Germany, the community of interests was self-evident; and Bismarck, who after the interview at Gastein looked upon any compromise with Austria as impossible, and an appeal to arms as inevitable, conveyed a secret hint to La Marmora that "he would gladly see an Italian General at Berlin."

But there was besides another Power with which it was necessary for all parties to reckon, and that was Imperial France. The Emperor Napoleon perceived that Austria and Prussia were engaged in a quarrel which must end either in a negotiation, or in a war equally fraught with advantage to himself. If peace could be maintained by his mediation, he trusted he could impose his own terms on the contending States; and if war must needs break out, he could look unconcerned on the struggle until one of the combatants was overpowered, when he felt sure he could have the exhausted conqueror at his discretion. In the meanwhile, with his garrison at Castle Sant' Angelo and the Austrians in the Quadrilateral, he had Italy under his thumb, and impressed upon that country the undeniable fact that it could not join Prussia, or draw the sword

against Austria, without his good pleasure. Preferring however to bribe rather than to threaten Italy, Napoleon suggested that it was easy for him to reconcile Austria to a pacific cession of Venetia.

Until the Italians could be fully reassured as to the French Emperor's real mind, they had no choice in the matter; and La Marmora was perfectly justified in the course he adopted, when, at the same time that at Bismarck's request he was sending General Govone to Berlin, he deemed it expedient to allay any suspicion in the mind of Napoleon, by sending his secret agent, Count Arese, to Paris.

Bismarck was bent on war from the beginning; but he temporized, either because he mistrusted his new Italian ally, or because he "could not well make out the real wishes of the French Emperor." He had little difficulty in persuading the Italian agents that Austria could not be sincere in her proposal to part with Venetia, and that even if she were, it was surely better policy for Italy to wrest the coveted province from Austria by war than to purchase it by money, which might at any time supply that Power with the means of recovering her loss. The Italians were eager to take the field, but they only felt equal to a contest with Austria. To engage at the same time with the Austrians on the Mincio and with the French on the Western Alps and the Tiber, could not enter

into their calculations—letting alone the gratitude that bound them to the sovereign and the nation who had won Solferino. There was no "Machiavellism" or "Italian duplicity" in the case. It was as much for the interest of Prussia as of Italy that the Allies should not have to deal with more than one enemy at a time, and certainly Bismarck, who had seen Napoleon at Biarritz,—where the Prussian statesman had been at least as much mystified by the French Emperor, as the French Emperor had been outwitted by the Prussian statesman,—was no less anxious to humour and *ménager* French susceptibilities that any Italian statesman could be. He scrupled besides to take the initiative in a contest which in Germany could not fail to assume a fratricidal character, and was bent on convincing his countrymen, his king, and the world, that there was no alternative. It was not without repugnance, and only at the last moment, that he brought himself to give the treaty by which he bound himself to Italy in an "offensive and defensive alliance." All he offered at first was a compact of "alliance and friendship." He bound Italy to fight whenever he should call upon her for co-operation, while for his own part he reserved liberty of action, even in the event of Italy entering on open hostilities, so long as any chance remained of an amicable way out of his difficulties with Austria.

As time passed, and the attitude of Austria

towards Italy became daily more threatening, La Marmora insisted with Bismarck that in the event of an outbreak of hostilities south of the Alps, Prussia should consider herself under obligation to take the field on her own side. But the Prussian statesman pointed to the words of the Treaty, and abided by them. It must not be supposed that it was Prussia's intention under any circumstances to abandon Italy to her fate. Bismarck, who was sure of himself, who strained every nerve to be ready for action, chose to throw dust into the eyes of his enemy, of France, and of the world, by clinging to his alleged hopes of a pacific solution. At no time was he false to his Southern ally, any more than his ally to him; but he was not free from some shadow of ungenerous mistrust, and did not sufficiently take into account the reasonable susceptibilities of an independent State which he had invited to treat on equal terms. The necessity of hoodwinking the French Emperor compelled the contracting parties to deal with great mutual vigilance and circumspection. Neither of them was willing to attack Austria single-handed; but Prussia, who looked upon a tussle with Austria as a necessity, was determined to insure the co-operation of Italy on any terms, and with that view she strove to keep her in a state of suspense and uncertainty to the last, lest she should give in to the French Emperor's temptation, and, accepting the bribe of Venetia, should withdraw from the terms of the Convention.

On the other hand Italy, who was already irrevocably committed, who better knew how little she could rely either on Austria or on the Emperor Napoleon, and to whom Bismarck's policy was a riddle, was most eager for war, and shuddered at the bare prospect of a peaceful arrangement between the two German Powers, which would have rendered her position desperate.

For what concerns the diplomatic transactions before the war, it seems in short that the contracting parties behaved as fairly and honourably towards each other as it is customary with diplomatists, and as the difficulties of the situation allowed. There was not much "Machiavellic perfidiousness" on either side, and both should have felt that "all is well that ends well."

The real unpardonable fault which La Mormora and the Italians committed was that of losing Custozza, and what was worse losing their senses after it. They from the first looked upon their disaster as irreparable; they were apparently appalled by the disorder and demoralization of some of the corps they had rashly sent to the slaughter, and they remained for a few days inactive, at a loss what to do, and less fit in their perplexity to resist the suggestions with which the scheming French Emperor incessantly plied them. One would think, to hear the Germans, that "it was from choice, and out of deference to Napoleon III., that the Italians covered themselves with the

ignominy of the defeat of Custozza; that it was from fear of conquering too much, that they contrived to fight so badly." But it was certainly because they allowed themselves to be beaten at Custozza that the Italians lost that confidence which flattered them that their army was a match for the Austrian, and that firmness which had hitherto made them reject the French Emperor's urgent proposals with respect to the cession of Venetia. As soon as they recovered from their panic, they resumed the offensive, bade Cialdini cross the Po, and pressed forward into the gorges of the Tyrol. Fortunately for the cause of humanity, but most unfortunately for Italy, Sadowa put a speedy end to the war, and Prussia, all intent upon the furtherance of her own interests, allowed France to dictate terms of peace for what concerned Italy. Napoleon felt that something was due to his own wounded pride, and to that of his people, who began to perceive how egregiously he had overreached himself. He exacted from Italy the most cruel sacrifice which he could ever have imposed; and the Italians resented, and do still resent, the Emperor's interference in the transfer of Venetia as a greater outrage than Mentana or any other of his transactions in his capacity of Protector of the Pope's Temporal Power. The blame however rests chiefly with Prussia. Had not this Power, puffed up as she was by her triumph over Austria, been at that moment over

anxious to avoid a collision with France, what could have prevented her from stretching out her hand to save Italy from the indignity which was being put upon her? Why did not Prussia protest, and contend that *she*, and not France, had conquered Venetia, and that it was for *her*, and not for France, to dispose of her conquest? Why? Simply because Prussia did not wish to bring France as a new enemy upon herself, and she little cared what affronts her less successful ally had to put up with.

On the whole, the reminiscences of 1866, and also those of 1870, when, as King Victor Emmanuel with a noble frankness avowed to the Emperor William at Berlin, "had it been in his power, he would have deemed it his duty to march to the rescue of vanquished France at the head of 200,000 men," are not of a nature to promote much cordiality between Germany and Italy, and those who wish for an alliance between the two countries must needs fall back on their community of interests. These interests can no longer be territorial, for Italy has come to the end of all her desires, and she can entertain no rational ambition of new acquisitions on her eastern frontier. Her people are very far as yet from being intoxicated with their long career of astonishing good fortune, and if we except such hot-headed patriots as the late Nino Bixio, they would firmly set their hearts against any disturbance the object of which should

be the annexation either of Trentine or of Istrian territory. With respect to Trieste, they think that strong material interests and geographical considerations ought to prevail over mere national sympathies to induce them gladly to leave Austria and Germany the peaceful possession of their only Mediterranean port; and as to Trent, they consider that mere fraction of a county of too little importance ever to become an apple of discord between two great and friendly States, though they do not relinquish all hope that a cession of it may some day be obtainable by purchase or exchange. As they look forward to no possible gain by war on the side of Austria, so neither would they seek a quarrel with France, whatever odds they might have on their side, for the recovery of Nice. The solidarity on which an alliance might still exist between Germany and Italy arises from the war waged against both of them by Ultramontanism; but even in this their views are so far diverging that while Italy is satisfied to come to an agreement with the Church on the terms of mutual independence, Germany is striving to assert the supremacy of the Civil over the Ecclesiastical authority. Were the present Pope or any of his successors to waive all pretensions to Rome, and consent to a formal and definitive renunciation of the Temporal Power, there is reason to apprehend that too much of a peace might soon spring up between the Vatican and

the Quirinal; a peace boding no good to religious freedom and perhaps to the authority of the civil law in the Peninsula, while for his own part, should Bismarck at any time so utterly crush the opposition of his own Ultramontane clergy, as to ensure the observance of the civil law throughout the Empire, he would have no further reason to quarrel with his fifteen millions of Roman Catholic subjects, and might even find it expedient to propitiate them by consenting to the restoration of that Pontifical Sovereignty with which only a few years ago he was on the very best terms.

But supposing even the most friendly understanding to exist between Germany and Italy, and the most earnest wish on the part of the stronger Power to come to the rescue of the weaker State at its sorest need, there would always be the attitude of the other European countries to be considered, for France is not likely again to appear in the field alone, and till Germany feels perfectly safe as to the intentions of Russia and Austria, she can hardly think of plunging into foreign complications to ward off from Italy those perils of invasion to which she would herself be exposed.

The chances of obtaining foreign help for Italy, as for all other States, depend on the power and will she may exhibit to help herself. They depend on the conviction she may keep up among her neighbours of her unwillingness, and yet of her readiness, to fight. Her natural position is that of armed

neutrality. Placed as she is between the Gaul and the Teuton, her lot must for ever be what it has at all times been, that of an earthenware vessel compelled to float with the tide between two huge iron pots. A shifting and see-sawing policy is with her a geographical necessity. It is the policy which enabled the House of Savoy to exchange their count's and duke's coronet for a king's diadem, and to extend their territory from snowy Alps to burning Etna. The kingdom must be maintained by the same arts by which it was won. A certain amount of defensive craft and dexterity is the only weapon by which the comparatively small and weak can contrive to hold their own against the pretensions of overbearing neighbours. Whatever development Italy may give to her national forces, she will never be able to engage single-handed in a contest with any of the colossal Powers which encompass her on the north, east, and west. Their mutual jealousies enabled her to aspire with success to that national unity which she could perhaps never have attained by her own unaided effort. But that being achieved she can no longer have any quarrel of her own, or any wish to mix herself up in other people's quarrels, taking the field with the strong in a subordinate capacity and playing jackal to the lion. As Minghetti said to the King, "It would only be by forcing Italy from her neutrality that France would compel her to sue for an alliance with Germany"; and it would only

be by an equal pressure on the other side that Germany would throw her into the arms of France. To seek support in the east against the west, or in the west against the east, will most fatally and for ever be for Italy a condition of existence. "Under the pressure of one god relief must be sought in the aid of another." But recourse to such aid should be had as seldom as possible. The conditions of Italy are not the very worst if her people know how to make the best of them. That intermediate position which constitutes her weakness, so long as she is suing for protection, becomes her strength when her alliance is solicited; for where the forces of two or more great States are nearly balanced, even the most insignificant weight can sink the scale. It is an absurdity to talk of French or German sympathies or predilections in Italy. The Italians, like other people, are for themselves alone. What they owe to Germany for Sadowa is not more and not less than what they owe to France for Solferino, and this is what Victor Emmanuel fearlessly intimated to the German Emperor in Berlin, who thanked the King for his frankness, and assured him of his thorough sympathy. Each of the two great rival Powers helped Italy in its turn, each in pursuit of its own object. Italy can in no way better requite their services than by refusing subserviency to their hostile passions, and endeavouring to keep the peace by avoiding all interference and committing herself to no alliance.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ITALIAN ARMY.

The Shah and the Italian Army—The Starvation System—Italian Military Annals—Necessity for the Rehabilitation of Italian Soldiers—French and Italian Soldiers—La Marmora—Ricotti—The Prussian System as Applied to Italy—Conditions of Italian Army—Dolorous Contrasts—Bersaglieri—Carabinieri—The Size of the Italian Army—Alliances or Neutrality.

When the Shah of Persia, after a short stay with the King of Italy at Turin and Milan, in the month of July of last year, crossed the Austrian frontier in the Tyrol, it is said that, upon inspecting a company of Austrian Jäger at Franzenfeste, he exclaimed, "Ah! these at last look like men; the Italian soldiers seemed to have just come out of hospital." This somewhat cutting remark of the Persian monarch was first quoted by the *Tiroler Bote*, or by some other journal of that province, and gave mortal offence to the Italian papers, which, while reporting the anecdote, were at no pains to dissemble their vexation. They denounced the story as pure invention suggested by a remnant of the old international animosity, and attributed it to the notoriously clerical character of the Austrian

print. There was however nothing absolutely improbable in the statement of their Innsbruck contemporary. Those Jäger were picked men belonging to a crack corps, stationed in the mountains, in the highest degree of training and condition. The contrast between them and some of the Italian troops on the line of the Shah's journey, probably worn out at that moment by camp life under the scourge of an almost tropical sun and by being often quartered in unhealthy localities, may have wrung from the barbarian king those disparaging words, which were certainly never intended for world-wide circulation. The Persian however had seen Victor Emmanuel's "Hundred Guards," the *Bersaglieri*, the cavalry, and artillery, and if he spoke as he was said to have done, he must have allowed himself a bit of Oriental exaggeration.

Still, without disputing the actual strength and efficiency of the Italian army, it must be allowed that some of the regiments, especially of the infantry of the line, did not at that moment look their best. They were lean and lank and had a fagged and hungry look; their dress was unbecoming, and sufficient attention was not paid to that tidiness and cleanliness which ought to be the first creed of the soldier's religion, even if he has no other. The rickety, half-starved appearance is owing to a variety of causes, but chiefly to the fact that the soldier's diet in Italy is not much better than it was a score of years ago, though his drill is now twice

and three times as severe as it used to be. The notion that "Southern people will thrive on food on which a Northerner would perish"; that "a hard crust of bread, water and a cigar will carry a Spaniard further than an Englishman would be able to go without the appliances of his roast beef, beer, coffee and whisky, or gin," must be set down among the rankest fallacies, and nothing would more promptly convince those Southern philosophers who thus reason of their error, than their appetite at a *table d'hôte* when they are in a position to indulge it. The Italian soldiers have about half as much meat as the English, and their ration is smaller than that which is distributed to French soldiers. The fact has been often and warmly disputed, but the point had to be yielded at the end of more than one discussion in the Italian Parliament. The ordinary food of the troops here besides this diminutive portion of meat, is bread oftener dipped in hot water than in broth, paste, polenta and vegetables, and they have, I am told, to find their own wine. The argument is, that the mass of them are enlisted amongst the peasantry and the poorer classes of the cities, whose fare at home is far worse than it is in the barracks, and who nevertheless are hard at work from sunrise to sunset; and that a sudden transition to more generous cheer would make them heavy and torpid during their period of service, and unfit them for the hard life which awaits them at the end of it. This bears upon a

disorder in the whole social organization of the country upon which I cannot comment at this moment. But for what concerns the army, the reasoning will not hold water. The slow plodding toil of the mere fag in the field or workshop has nothing in common with the brisk, double-quick-step exercise by which a soldier is now-a-days trained to his business throughout the Continent. The food which may suit a dray-horse is not the same that is required for the hunter or the race-horse. We all know by what means the courage of a mastiff, a bull-dog, or a game-cock needs to be supported, and whatever may be the character of an army, we must not forget that the proof of it is in the fighting.

The Italians are very justly and very properly sensitive on any subject connected with their military establishment. There is nothing they are so ready to resent as the old taunt, "Italians don't fight." There was an appeal to history in almost every paper in which the Shah's damaging words were reproduced, to prove that the Italians have often been made into the very best of soldiers. No one will gainsay that; the question is not whether the Italians can be made, but whether they can make themselves soldiers, and therein lies an immense difference. It is wholly a matter of organization and discipline. Lombards with and under the Austrians, and Neapolitans led by the French, are known to have fought very creditably; so have

also Hindoos drilled by the English and negroes commanded by Americans. But since the battle of Legnano,* in the twelfth century, wherever the Italians have fought single-handed and as a nation, from Cortenova to Custozza, their military annals register only defeats. Where would be the use of denying or palliating the unwelcome truth? The only army in the Peninsula which at any time attained a respectable degree of efficiency was the Piedmontese, and that was but half Italian; the main element of it, the organizing genius, was Savoyard. But with respect to Southern Italy there is hardly an instance, from the invasion of Charles VIII. to the exploit of Garibaldi, in which the forces of the kingdom of Naples have not been "crumpled up" in three days.

It may of course be pleaded that Italy never had an army for the simple reason that it never was a nation, and that from Fornovo to Custozza it never appeared as a nation in the field; but it is

* "The period in Italian history nearly co-extensive with the greatness of the House of Swabia is perhaps upon the whole the most honourable to Italy; that in which she displayed the most of national energy and patriotism. A Florentine or Venetian may dwell with pleasure upon later times, but a Lombard will cast back his eye across the desert of centuries till it reposes on the field of Legnano" (Hallam's 'Middle Ages,' chap. iii. part i. Conrad IV.). Venice and Florence fought bravely in many instances at sea, behind walls, or against Italians, but they never *won a pitched battle, by land, against a foreign enemy.* Against the Turks, by land, Venice only employed Sclavonians; and Florence was among the first to entrust her defence to foreign hirelings.

precisely this circumstance which calls the world's attention to what is being done to provide the newly reunited country with a force commensurate with the position to which it has raised itself among the European Powers.

Well may the Italians feel how wrong they were in allowing themselves to be beaten at Custozza! They had longed so earnestly for that battle; they had been preparing for it with so much alacrity and by such heavy sacrifices; the King announced with so loud a flourish that he had crossed the Mincio at the head of I know not how many divisions, and twenty-four hours later the Italian army was—nowhere. The soldiers, we are told, behaved splendidly. Even the Archduke Albert who routed them bore witness that they came up to the charge "*unendlich tapfer.*" Those who were engaged at all fought like men; the fault rests wholly with those who led them, who failed to bring up the main bulk of the forces where they were wanted, and who in fact were not worthy of the troops they commanded. But the point is that it is not enough for an army to fight and fight valiantly; the thing is to conquer. And it is not sufficient for a nation to muster up soldiers; it must also produce generals, or it must pay the penalty of defeat either in gold or in honour, whether the fault lies with the men who should fight or with those who ought to make them fight. And worse than the loss of the battle itself, as I have already hinted, was the lapse of so many

days wasted in idleness by the Italian army in its cantonments of Cremona after its defeat, an inaction which, after the most patient inquiry, men are still at a loss how to explain; for unless it can be proved that a first check had so utterly demoralized the Italian soldiery that no entreaty of their officers could induce them to reappear in the field, one must necessarily believe that either La Marmora and his Council, or some above them, for reasons of their own, were remiss in the duty which was incumbent upon them to retrieve their lost honour by an immediate renewal of the contest. The same inexplicable helplessness or inertia after a first partial disaster disgraced the Italian fleet at Lissa.

No one would wish to be too hard on the Italians for the unfavourable results of their first attempts to *gagner leurs éperons*. The art of war is not learnt in a day, and soldiers as well as commanders are not born, but made. It is not by misrepresenting the past, but by looking the present steadily in the face, that Italy will learn where to find the elements of the army of the future.

The Italians have many of the best qualities which can fit men for soldiers' work. They are sober and docile, long-suffering and naturally strong, agile, healthy, and brave. Many of them are small of stature, like the French; they do not come up to the English or German standard any more than their Roman ancestors reached the height of the Northern barbarians whom they

however for a long time easily overcame. There is no lack of "fine men" in Italy, and the army would present as goodly an appearance as any in the world if the men were picked out by voluntary enlistment as in England, and not draughted by conscription as in France, chance often sending the dwarf and the weakling to the barracks, and the stalwart giant to the counter, or more often to the altar, nothing being more common than to meet in Italian streets a procession where tiny soldiers are made to escort tall and portly priests. With respect to martial beauty of mien and countenance, the Italian soldiers have no equals in Europe, unless it be in Spain.

Strongly attached as Italians are to their homes, they are sufficiently adventurous, cheerful and enterprising when weaned or forced from them. Without the vanity of the French, they have the same *esprit de corps* and high sense of honour. As mere conscripts they are not equally noisy in their mirth, but as soldiers they are not less cheerful. And most assuredly they are less addicted to boast and swagger. In the various garrisons where they are quartered they are endeared to the population not only by their excellent behaviour, but by their heroic exertions in behalf of the citizens whenever earthquakes, inundations, or other public calamities call their energies into play. They are as merry as schoolboys and as devoted to their duty as monks ought to be.

I had a good opportunity of appreciating the different qualities of French and Italian soldiers at the time of the campaign of Solferino.

I saw the men of both armies leaving Genoa when war was declared, hastening to the defence of Novi, then threatened with an Austrian attack. I saw them at Calcinato, near Brescia, when the first rumours of the Peace of Villafranca were spread among them. I wish I could paint them as they were at the opening and again at the closing of that short campaign.

La Marmora had taken good care that his Piedmontese should be inured to hard work before the outbreak of hostilities; but at the peace his men looked like the mere wraiths of their former selves. They were not sun-burnt, but sun-baked. Touch them, and they will scald you like earthenware hot from the furnace. Their walk was not like human pace; they rushed past us not like Zouaves, but like devils. A rivalship had sprung up between French and Sardinians as to which of them should attain the greatest speed in their march, and which should keep it up longer. Now that the sun had made all faces black, and the dust all coats white, it was almost impossible to distinguish the French from the Piedmontese, only the latter sang more in tune, and when at rest exhibited greater modesty, amiability, and gentleness of disposition.

The Frenchman thinks that he must always look savage to be thought brave. The high cheek-

bone, the small grey eye, the turn-up nose, the képi brim raised at an angle of forty-five degrees; the long, scraggy, cravatless neck; the destructive organ highly developed behind the ear,—have something repulsive and offending. "I am a killing machine," says the Frenchman; "they have tempered me, ground me for murderous work. Kill me or I will kill you; that is all I am good for, all I care for. I am always fighting, always furbishing up my weapons; I have a cartridge in my gun-barrel, a bayonet at the end of it. I fire my piece, then instantly charge. The Emperor has said it. The bayonet is a French weapon."

The Italian at rest has a bland, mild look. There beams in his countenance a look of imperturbable enjoyment of existence. Down he lies on the ground, and looks up at his deep-blue heaven, his musket harmless beside him, gathering dew—future rust—in the grass, and his knapsack makes him no hard pillow.

"Oh! let me live, let me rest!" says the Italian. "King and country called me under arms, and here I am. I have met the Austrian, and stood fire when bidden. I came to close quarters, and gave my foe the bayonet lest he should give it me. My king is always foremost in the fight, and how could I be the craven to skulk behind? But for the rest, this war trade is a cursed Cain business, all hard crusts and hard knocks. I hate the din and the dust; and the cannon—if it

does not kill, it stuns. We will see the Austrians out, please God! and then we shall have piping times again, and cool wine-gardens, and lemonade, and the 'Biondina in gondoletta'—the arch-eyed girl we left behind."

Such, physiognomically drawn, were the military characters of French and Italians at a time in which the two nations were animated by no other feeling than professional emulation. And I purposely said Italians, not Piedmontese, because before the war was over the Sardinian ranks were filled up by men from the whole Peninsula, and they showed from the first that tendency to amalgamation and "fraternization" which has rendered the army in Italy the most active element of national unity.

With such materials to work upon the edifice of the Italian army ought to be easily built, yet a considerable number of Ministers have been at it since the war of 1859, and the army is still, in the opinion of competent judges, far from what it might and should be. The causes which have hitherto hindered success have been, first, the desire to make too large an army; secondly, the too frequent change of the men at the head of the military department, each of whom deemed it his duty to undo whatever had been done by his predecessor. La Marmora acquitted himself of his task with credit from 1849 to 1859, during which period he took in hand the battalions which had been routed and demoralized at Novara, and re-tempered them

into those solid corps which won the good opinion of the English in the Crimea, and shared the triumphs of the French at Palestro and Solferino. But La Marmora was a Piedmontese instructor of Piedmontese pupils. Since then the Savoyards are gone, and even the Subalpine element constitutes but a small minority in the forces of the Italian kingdom. Neapolitans and Sicilians had to be amalgamated with Lombards and Venetians. The patriotism of Garibaldian officers had to be rewarded by promotion to the ranks hitherto reserved for well-tried veterans. The army was demoralized as well as nationalized, with such effects as might be anticipated. La Marmora's notions of drill and discipline were denounced as obsolete, and new experiments have been again and again tried, till hardly any trace of the original organization remains.

For the first time since 1860 Italy has now a Minister of War retaining his portfolio, notwithstanding the crisis by which his colleagues were overthrown. General Ricotti has the reputation of a man of talent—almost a man of genius. No Minister before him attempted innovation on so large a scale, and his schemes of reform are so vast and new that it is impossible to judge of them in the detail. They must be carried out to their ultimate results, and the completion must be left to him alone, as the work he has begun could be taken up by no other hands. He is a young, very sanguine

man, conceited and testy, extremely abrupt, impetuous and rude in address, but hard-working and earnest, and, what is best, perfectly sure of himself. He wishes the responsibility to lie on him alone, and the measures he has hitherto proposed and adopted have met with the more or less spontaneous approbation even of men who rank among his opponents, a very few of the martinets of the old La Marmora school alone excepted.

Ricotti has, wherever he found it practicable, applied to the Italian army the leading ideas of the Prussian system—a three years' service in the ranks of the standing army, with a liability to further employment in the reserve, the one year's volunteers, large cadres, camp-life extending over several months in the year, hard drill, and incessant general instruction. The army in Italy has another mission to perform besides that of a mere fighting machine. It is looked upon as a school for the political reconstitution of the country as well as for the moral regeneration of the people. The Italians are brought into the ranks that they may learn to know, esteem and love one another, and no doubt, as I have said, military service has done and is doing more towards the fusion of the various races of the Peninsula into one nation, and towards the licking into shape of the most uncouth boors and savage bears from the remotest provinces, than could be effected either by legislative acts or by educational contrivances. By becoming a soldier a very brigand of Calabria is

made into a man and an Italian, and I have the evidence of all the officers who have a hand in the instruction of the raw recruits of the various districts to the effect that the stuff of the men is uniformly excellent, and that with proper management the same amount of intellectual development, obedience, love of the service and *esprit de corps* can everywhere be obtained.

Not a few of Ricotti's achievements are still the object of much animadversion. There are many of his critics who are not quite satisfied that the total abolition of the drum, and the exclusive use of the trumpet for heavy as well as for light infantry, will have good practical results. The Minister has been taunted with being too indefatigable in his innovation, not only of the substantial but also of the ornamental parts of the military costume, putting both the public treasury and the private purses of the officers to intolerable expenses in stars, gold-lace and braid, and rags and tags of military millinery, to substitute a somewhat foppish for what was hitherto a simple and manly uniform; all culminating in the plumed steel helmet of the generals, a subject about which the Minister has busied himself for months, and after all a mere piece of finery, professedly "only to be worn for show, and without prejudice of the old three-cornered hat, which is still kept for use."

But the application of the Prussian system to the Italian army met with considerable difficulties, and

these were the same with which reforming administrators had to contend in France, in Austria and other countries. Three years' service may be sufficient for the mere material training of the conscript, but it does not actually make soldiers, especially in Italy, where so large a part of the army must do police work; where large detachments are told off to do duty at gaols and penitentiaries, or sent into the woods in pursuit of brigands, being thus frequently for months at a time deprived of that instruction and of that intercourse with their comrades on which subordination and military brotherhood are to be based. Again, the one year's volunteers are not draughted into the various regiments with the common conscripts, but enlisted in separate companies and battalions, establishing invidious aristocratic differences in an army where, at the outset at least, everything ought to be placed on the footing of soldierly equality. With respect to the provincial battalions which constitute one of the main features of the Prussian organization, not only has nothing been attempted in Italy, but Ricotti has even taken upon himself to abolish the territorial and other names borne by brigades and regiments in old Piedmontese times, such as Piemonte or Novara Cavalry, Cuneo or Montferrat Infantry, &c. And he has also considerably reduced the forces of the Bersaglieri, Grenadiers, and other *corps d'élite*, in the opinion of some persons "creating a uniformity fatal to the development of that

soldierly pride which is grounded on *esprit de corps*," but in his own conceit "strengthening the line which ought to be the *pièce de consistance* of an army, giving the whole body of the troops the efficiency of the *corps d'élite*, removing jealousies between the various branches of the service, and extending to the entire army that feeling of comradeship which was hitherto monopolized by the brigade, regiment, or battalion. The great object for Italy," the Minister reasons, "is to make a national army. Everything must be avoided which could tend to give the military organization that provincial or regional spirit wherein lies the greatest political danger." Exception however is made in behalf of the Alpine companies, a kind of local militia intended for the defence of the mountain-passes on the frontier—a new institution, which owes its origin to the present Minister, and gives fair promise of fully answering its purpose.

I have seen frequent reviews of Italian troops in Rome, in winter on the Piazza del Popolo and in the adjoining streets; in summer at the Macao and Piazza di Termini, and I have also visited the camp at Palestrina, as well as those at Somma and Ciriè. The outward appearance of the men is, on the whole, satisfactory, though much is still deficient in that cleanliness and strict rule which ought to be the soul of an army. The Italians are in many things wedded to French ideas, and they take it too readily for granted that a kind of "loose order" suits their

troops better than the "stiff and starch, pedantic discipline" on which the German nations pride themselves. Experience, however,—the experience of Custozza, or of those far greater disasters of Woerth and Spicheron,—has shown that what is called "pedantry" can be too far disregarded, and that too great faith can be put in that dash and impetuosity, in that *élan*, which if it can take the place of all other military virtues so long as it is backed by success, is apt to flag on a first reverse, and in the end to lead to a disgraceful *débâcle*. Those who saw, as I did, the French of Solferino in 1859, required no very great powers of divination to imagine what the French of Sedan would be eleven years later.

The Italians have taken to travelling of late and they are apt to see and judge with discernment. I was with some of them last autumn on the Schmelz, the usual parade and exercise ground of the Viennese garrison, where the Emperor Francis Joseph entertained his guest, the King of Italy, by a review of a little army of 15,000 men. Again I stood with the same companions a few days later, upon the esplanade before the Castle of Potsdam, where the Emperor William provided a similar exhibition for the same honoured visitor. In both places the spectators were amazed at that steadiness, evenness and precision which give German battalions the appearance of moving walls. Where thousands and myriads of bodies move like one body, it is easily

conceived how one soul can give them one and the same impulse. Up those masses came, company after company, squadron after squadron, in straight lines, with close ranks, the colonels with lowered swords, the men and officers with staring eyes fixed on their sovereign and on the group before which they passed—a silent, grim, fire-breathing array, tramping on irresistible as a steam-engine and inexorable as fate, the most wonderful result to which years of training and discipline, and the most assiduous application of science, can bring a human multitude.

My countrymen, with all their faults, are less conceited than many of their neighbours, and however fondly they may dwell on the glorious traditions of the past, they do not attempt to resist the evidence of their own eyes; and what they see abroad impresses them with the sense of their present shortcomings. At every step on their progress through Germany—through that Germany against which they long harboured such deep-seated rancour and prejudice—they saw training and discipline in all civil and social relations producing among a comparatively dull and tardy population greater wonders than spontaneous genius and correct instinct ever achieved among them. I saw them strolling up and down the ring at Vienna, wondering at the grand massive buildings rising on all sides with picturesque magnificence, and contrasting in their minds all the vastness and variety of those thorough-

fares with the cramped, unwholesome closeness of their own piazzas, and the filth of their lanes and alleys, where the very churches scarcely escape pollution and desecration. I saw them in Berlin rapt in amazement before the clusters of palaces which a few years of prosperity have reared, and lamenting that so much treasure and so much labour should have been wasted on a site that will perhaps always be among the most unhealthy, and of which no human contrivance can ever relieve the flatness and dreariness. I saw them walking through the large halls of museums and galleries, and although they might feel pride in the rank the masterpieces of their old schools still maintain above all rivals, they were compelled to admit that the tables are turned against them in later times even in that respect; that they understand comparatively little about the worship that should be paid to art, about the order and system in which its treasures should be arranged and disposed so as best to illustrate its history and promote its development. In many, in most things, they acknowledged that their pupils have become their masters, and that civilization must now be expected to proceed from the north to the south of the Alps.

Still what most challenged the attention of these right-minded Italians, what caused them the most poignant grief and humiliation, was the evidence of the superior military organization of those northern countries, those warlike displays on the Schmelz at

Vienna, and in the Lust-garten at Potsdam, which explained to them how Sadowa was won and lost without causing either irrevocable dejection to the vanquished or overweening exultation to the victor. The Italians in Berlin found themselves in presence of the soldiers who fought and won their battles for them, as in Vienna they stood before the soldiers against whom their own battles were fought and lost. I believe they were hardly just to the Austrians when they thought even the guards at Potsdam so infinitely superior to the crack regiments mustered for their entertainment at Vienna. On the parade-ground at least, and in point of training, the balance, in my humble opinion, rather sinks on the Austrian side. But in both armies they saw the same discipline—that same early-taught and deeply-inculcated obedience that tempers a man's mind and heart for command: they saw the same sense of duty, the same reverence for rank, the same readiness on the part of tall stalwart veterans to submit to mere striplings, allowing blood and station that ascendency which among Teutonic races such advantages will never fail to assert. My Italian friends were astonished as well as amused to see the pride and confidence with which not only the princes of the blood, but other scions of lordly families, scarcely out of the nursery, were marching at the head or in the common files of the battalions in which they are enlisted as volunteers, going back after parade to their toys and sweet-

meats. Whatever the other institutions of Austria and Germany may in time become, the army must either remain organized on its old aristocratic principles, or it must cease to be; and the Italians begin to see in the disorders of France and Spain that little is to be expected of soldiers wedded to the notions of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." Whatever my travelling companions might think about the respective merits of Prussian and Austrian troops, the contrast between the army of either empire and their own seemed to have little to cheer them; and they must feel, and did feel, with deep mortification how much there is to be done, not only in the instruction and organization of the soldier, but also in the regeneration and rehabilitation of the man in Italy, as their country cannot hope to have a real right to existence till it shows itself ready and able to fight for it. For doubtless the first quality required of a nation aspiring to independence, in the present relations between the various families of the human race, lies in its fighting powers. A nation may never be called upon to put forth its warlike energies,—its wish ought to be to avoid all quarrels,—but it must always be prepared to speak to its neighbours in the words of the Scotch motto, "*Nemo me impune lacessit.*" This many of my countrymen feel; and in the tears I fancied I saw glistening in the eyes of some of the Italian officers standing beside me at the review, at Potsdam, I detected the bitter

compunction with which the conquered of Custozza, if he has a heart in his bosom, must view the military perfection which insured the success of the conqueror of Sadowa.

And the Italians care a great deal—some people think even too much—about their army; and on the whole the attention which the country bestows upon it is by no means thrown away. There are officers in command of many of the corps, studious and painstaking gentlemen, who seem determined, and feel confident, that their soldiers shall in any future emergency behave creditably, if any amount of brain-work on their part can accomplish that end. The Bersaglieri are still as good as any Chasseurs, Zouaves, or other light infantry in the world, though they are no longer what they were when they issued from the hands of their instructor, Alessandro La Marmora, when they were better than any—when they were recruited among the very hardiest mountaineers of Savoy and Piedmont, and put to so severe a test of incessant work that, like vases of china or glass hardened by fire, nearly as many of them cracked in the process as were found fit for use. The artillery also and the cavalry do their work creditably, though it is a matter of general regret that the quality of the horses should not always correspond with the excellence of the men.

Still, the flower of the Italian army are the *Carabinieri*, or Gendarmes, the main police force

of the country, now numbering as many as 25,000 men. These troops, as they had been organized under the La Marmora administration in the days of old Piedmont, had reached as high a degree of perfection as it is in the nature of any similar institution to attain; their training and discipline and their moral character were above all praise, and the respect and gratitude of the population towards them were unbounded. Since the annexation of so many provinces, and in consequence of the unsettled state of the southern districts, the Carabineer corps, like the Bersaglieri and so many other Piedmontese institutions, had to be *Italianized*, and that hardly means improved. They had to be raised from 4,000 to 25,000 men; and the introduction at once of so many new elements could not fail at first to lessen their efficiency, and even to some extent to affect their respectability, especially as in the south in olden times, the armed force, consisting of mere *sbirri* in uniform and not many degrees removed from the felons they had to deal with, were as unpopular as the Papal and Bourbon Governments in whose pay they acted, and came in for as large a share of the public hatred and contempt. Some time must elapse, perhaps generations pass away, before Romans, Neapolitans, and Sicilians lay aside those prejudices which make them look upon gendarmes, tax-gatherers, custom-house officers and other Government functionaries as public enemies. But

in the meanwhile the utmost pains are taken to weed and reform the Carabineer corps, and to bring it back to its former honourable standard. It has lately become somewhat difficult to get well-instructed and deserving soldiers to volunteer for the service, as they instinctively writhe under the unjust and unreasonable ill-will which the populace in some of the less civilized provinces harbour against them. All good men in Italy—and in this as in other countries they constitute the majority—profess and entertain the highest regard for the Carabineers. For my own part, I have often seen the new recruits of the corps, or *Allievi Carabinieri*, exercising on the Turin Piazza d'Armi, near their chief depôt, and I must say that neither at the Schmelz at Vienna, nor at the Lust-garten at Potsdam, nor in the parade-ground at Hyde Park, have I seen battalions which could exceed the neatness, ease and elegance of their drill. These recruits come into the corps as picked soldiers, and are chosen for physical as well as moral qualities; but they go through their apprenticeship as if they were mere conscripts, and they become so proficient and thorough in their manœuvres, that although they are sent forth in detachments and scattered all over the country in the discharge of their police functions, they are always able to rally and close their ranks at a moment's notice, and to do their old work as soldiers, as if they had never been asunder. It is in both a military

and a political capacity that they have invariably appeared in the field in every campaign, where they took precedence of all other troops and constituted the sovereign's body-guard.

Still the main fault in the organization of the Italian army lies, as I have said, in its overgrown size; and for this the Minister himself can hardly be held responsible. The Italians are haunted by gloomy anticipations of coming wars; they believe that hostilities can only arise in quarters where they will have to encounter vastly superior adversaries, and they seem only anxious about the means of meeting numbers by numbers. They must have 300,000 effective combatants in the front line, and, as the finances of the kingdom are inadequate to the outlay, the Minister is compelled to husband his means by keeping the troops on what competent judges consider "short commons," and in thinning the ranks by granting almost unlimited furloughs, thus keeping up little more than the cadres, maintaining officers out of proportion with the men, and interfering with the thorough training and discipline of these latter.

Such are the main charges brought against the administration of General Ricotti, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see them fully and triumphantly contradicted. But, I repeat, the proof of an army is in the fighting, and we all know how little the estimates that were made of

the respective capabilities of the Austrian and French armies on the one side, and of the Prussian on the other, were borne out by the terrible struggles of 1866 and 1870. It is reckoned that it will take at least ten years to bring the system projected by General Ricotti into full working gear, and it is doubtful whether Italy will have to take the field either during that period or afterwards, or whether she will for ever remain under the weight of her disaster of Custozza. For these last few years the only test to which the valour of the Italian army has been put has been a desultory hunt after brigands—a kind of warfare which tries the nerves of the men, but affords little opportunity for the display of the officers' abilities. The difficulties of establishing a proper order and discipline in an army naturally increase with its size, and in Italy especially more has been achieved by the small forces led into the field by Charles Albert in 1848, and by Victor Emmanuel in 1859, than by the disproportionate hosts the former King had with him at Novara in 1849, and his son at Custozza in 1866. If questions are to be settled by the number of men a State can muster, Italy will never be able to cope with France, Austria, or Germany. She can never be a match for any of those Powers, and her services as an auxiliary will be better appreciated if she can supply a small but highly-trained and thoroughly-disciplined contingent,—say of 100,000 or 150,000 men at the utmost. But if she will limit herself to

the far more advisable policy of neutrality, a good line of fortifications, aided by railways and an efficient navy, are, to say the least, as important requisites as the army in the field. The Italian papers have often been discussing the *pros* and *cons* of having the neutrality of Italy acknowledged and sanctioned by the great European Powers—placing the country under the protection of the law of nations on the same safe conditions with the adjoining Swiss Confederacy. But the position of the country itself, and the manner in which her differences with her immediate neighbours were adjusted by the providential events of the last fourteen years, sufficiently guarantee the neutrality of Italy if she be sincerely bent on observing it on her own side. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Visconti Venosta, summed up the policy which he thought he could best recommend to his countrymen as one which should insure independence and yet avoid isolation ("*Indipendenti sempre, isolati mai*"), by which he seemed to intimate that alliances were for Italy a necessity. But he did not perhaps consider that alliances involve duties as well as rights, and that a country, however determined to shun all subjects of dispute on her own account, may be drawn by its confederates into quarrels in no way concerning it. In the meanwhile, a disproportionately large force and the organization of all the citizens into an armed nation, if they be a necessity for Germany, for France and other States

which have old scores to settle, would only constitute a danger to a country like Italy, were they to lead it into a false confidence in its own power—a confidence easily misconstrued into menace and bravado by envious and unscrupulous neighbours.

CHAPTER XIII.

ITALIAN FORTIFICATIONS.

The Defences of Italy—Italian Military Geography—Lines of Defence—The Alps—North Italian Fortresses—Peninsular Italy—The Coasts—Naval Forces—Admiral Saint-Bon's Plan—Men and Soldiers in Italy.

A YOUNG Minister of War, a man of talent, energy and good-will, could no doubt achieve much if twenty years' time and half a milliard of Italian lire were given to him. Italy should be armed, at least for defensive purposes—that point is universally admitted. It so happens however that the 500,000,000 lire are not forthcoming, and that it is doubtful whether twenty years or even twenty months will be allowed to Italy, or to any other European country for warlike preparations. The problem is therefore what can be done with such means as are at hand and within such time as Italy may call her own?

We have seen what may be expected from the Italian army. Let us consider how far the efficiency of the army in the field may be enhanced by the advantages of position and by the aid of stone walls and earthworks.

Military men have not lost all faith in fortifications, even after the sad experiences of Strasbourg, Metz and Paris. Granted that the offence has everywhere outstripped the defence; that no fortresses are any longer deemed impregnable; that the fall of a nation which can no longer keep the field is only a question of time. There is something at all events in the mere power to gain time, to break a fall that may not be ultimately averted. And fortifications are not only of avail to prolong a struggle at its close, they also afford leisure to prepare for it at the outset,—they enable an army to form and mobilize itself under their shelter. They are the screen behind which a good general arrays his forces and lays his plan of operations.

It is upon considerations of this nature that the Minister Ricotti came before Parliament with his system of Italian fortifications.

Italy is both a continental and a maritime State; or, in other words, she is exposed to attack by land and sea. She may be summoned to ward off an enemy attempting to break through the frontier of the Alps, or she may be called upon to oppose his march after he has already broken through that mountain barrier, and she may have to meet the forces of an enemy landing on any points of her Mediterranean or Adriatic coasts.

The conditions of Italy since her elevation to the ranks of an independent and united kingdom are what they have never been at any former epoch,

and the system on which the defence of her territory was at various times undertaken by her native or foreign rulers, must now not only be materially altered, but almost absolutely reversed. Italy has never been one state or one country since old Roman times. Never since then has she been summoned as a whole nation to take the field against an invader threatening the Peninsula from the other side of the Alps—no such case since Rome withstood the onsets of Hannibal or of the Cimbrians and Teutons, whom she overcame with difficulty, and of those Goths and Vandals by which she was in the end too easily overcome. The wars of the Middle Ages and of modern times were generally fought, not by Italy against a foreign foe, but by one foreign foe against another. There were not many instances in which an invader was not favoured in his march either by some foot of ground he already possessed, or by some ally he had previously secured, south of the mountains. The gates of the Alpine citadel were seldom thoroughly closed, and they hardly ever were in one and the same hand.

When the French or Germans crossed the Alps, it was generally to dispute the ground immediately adjacent to their own territory. Their ordinary battle-field was the plain of North Italy, each of the belligerents being naturally anxious to venture as little as possible beyond his own centre of operations, and desirous of clinging to those Alps through which reinforcements could be received, and retreat

could be effected. What is called Peninsular Italy,—*i. e.*, the country south of the Apennines, Tuscany, Rome and Naples,—was in recent times comparatively free from invasion, and seldom became the theatre of prolonged operations. The brunt of the war was generally borne by Piedmont and Lombardy—the former as the advanced post of France, the latter of Germany or Austria. But the consolidation of the country into one kingdom and the removal of the capital, as well as of the necessary centre of operations, first to Florence, then to Rome, have changed the whole aspect of affairs; for an enemy who would now march across the Alps to the conquest of Italy, would, like Hannibal or Alaric, have first to subjugate Northern Italy, overrunning Piedmont or Lombardy, then to cross the Apennines between the Emilia and Tuscany and advance by the valley of the Tiber, to dictate his terms at the gates of the capital. The line of defence is long and allows many chances of rescue; but the base of operations is far from the real centre of national resources. The main strength of Italy is all on the first line. That being forced, it would become difficult to give any further resistance scope and consistency. Greatly as the views of military authorities differ on the subject, they however are all agreed on the only course of defence to be adopted. Their scheme would be first to make a stand on the line of the Alps; then on the line of the Po and of the fortresses on its banks and on those of its affluents; then

on the line of the Apennines, along Emilia and Liguria; which three lines being all lost, the war would be brought to an entrenched camp to be laid on some spot near Rome.

The frontier of Italy is marked by the Alps, which separate the country on the west from France, on the north from Switzerland, and on the east from Austria. On the French side the line of demarcation is laid almost entirely on the crest of the chain, the territory of the two countries being divided in accordance with their respective watersheds; but Switzerland and Austria both overstep the natural boundary, the former possessing the southern slopes of the mountains in the Canton Ticino, and the Grison district of Val Misocco, down to the Lakes Maggiore and Lugano; and the latter thrusting her territory of Trent or South Tyrol like a wedge between Lombardy and Venetia as far as the head of the Lake of Garda, and the opening of the Valley of the Adige near Verona. On the extreme east, again, the Julian Alps fall away from the Italian territory, which terminates at the right bank of the Isonzo.

On the border of Switzerland Italy is altogether undefended, and relies for protection on Swiss neutrality. With respect to Austria, the forts of Edolo and Rocca d'Anfo, which guard the passes between the Lombard provinces of Bergamo and Brescia and South Tyrol, as well as the famous plateau of Rivoli which bars the valley of the

Adige, were made by Austrians and intended to oppose the advance of an enemy coming up from the south and west. They were the defences of Austria against Italy; and in Italian hands the direction of those forts would have to be altered and in a great measure reversed before they could be used against an enemy invading from the north. The same may be said of some of the fortresses of the Quadrilateral, especially Peschiera and Verona.

On the eastern side, the frontier of Venetia adjoining South Tyrol at Bassano and Belluno, and further east the passes of Friuli and the open line of the Isonzo, would have to be made safe by fortresses which either have no existence or require important modifications and improvements.

The Italians, however, harbour little uneasiness on that side. The position made for Austria by Solferino and Sadowa has been frankly and finally accepted by that Power; and as Italy has really no designs on Trieste, and none on Trent, unless it might be had by peaceful means, it is felt that no subject of direct collision between the two States can arise. But on the other hand there is an instinct at work in Italian hearts, which tells them that the most immediate danger threatens them from the west, and that their attention should first be directed to the frontier of the Maritime, Cottian, Graian and Pennine Alps—that chain of mountains which parts them from France, from Ventimiglia on the coast, to the Grand St. Bernard in the Valley of Aosta.

This frontier, as I have said, is thoroughly well defined by the line of the mountain summits, and it constitutes so excellent a natural barrier, that it requires very litle help from the hand of man to render it impassable. The loss of Savoy and Nice has, no doubt, considerably weakened the old armour of Piedmontese on this side. But it must be remembered that those two outworks of the Alpine citadel were almost invariably and immediately lost on any onset of France on Sardinia, and that the real tug of war only began when attempts were made to force the gorges of the mountains on the Italian side. The French of the first Republic had already been for three years in possession of Savoy and Nice, when their further progress was stopped by the fastnesses of the uppermost chain; and it is questionable whether even all the genius of the young Bonaparte would ever have found a gap in that mountain-wall to go through, had it not been for the improvident policy of the unarmed neutrality of Genoa, which enabled him, in sheer violation of the law of nations, to march along shore around the Maritime Alps and to make his way, almost unopposed, across the Apennine Passes above Millesimo and Mondovì. To force a way through the Western Alps has never been an easy matter for a French army, even when that mountain-chain was in the keeping of a small State which did not possess it from end to end. Should United Italy, now mistress of the

whole frontier, be unequal to the task of which little Piedmont repeatedly acquitted itself with honour?

It is true that in the demarcation of the frontier between that part of the territory of Nice which was ceded to France and that which was left to Italy, the French contrived to secure every possible advantage for themselves; and by the purchase of the purely Italian districts of Mentone and Roccabruna from the Prince of Monaco, they overstepped the real Alpine boundary at Turbia (*Trophea Augusti*),—a boundary equally marked by nature and by ancient Roman tradition,—and thus obtained an easy access along shore to Ventimiglia. But Ventimiglia itself is or can be made a strong bulwark, and so can every bluff and creek along the Riviera, so as to dispute the Cornice road inch by inch, especially if the Turin and Genoa and Turin and Savona lines of railway (the latter of which has just been opened,) and the one now projected from Cuneo across the Col di Tenda, and down the valley of the Roya to Ventimiglia, allow the defenders to send timely reinforcements to any threatened point.

With respect to the Alps above Tenda, those passes at all practicable for an army which either railways or highways traverse, are already barred by the forts of Vinadio, Fenestrelles, Exilles, &c.,—mountain strongholds somewhat dilapitated and indifferently armed perhaps, but which could with but little expense be brought up to the highest

degree of efficiency, in spots where nature has already reared the bastions and dug the trenches or moats. Each of the Alpine companies of sharp-shooters now organized by General Ricotti will, if properly trained and armed with the right sort of rifles, perform in those defiles the service of an army; and the French showed themselves mere children when, whether to spite or to alarm the Italians, they proposed to mine the entrance to the Mont Cenis Tunnel; for surely kingdoms are not easily invaded by express trains; and difficult as it may be to make roads and railroads for the accommodation of friends, nothing can be easier, in such a region as the high Alps, than to break them up and render them utterly impassable to enemies. Some stronghold on the ruins of the old Brunetta di Susa, where the roads of Mont Cenis and Monginevra meet, will however have to be rebuilt. For the railway that comes down from Modane through the great Fréjus tunnel, the Fort de l'Exille will be sufficient. Further north, on the Pennine Alps, the Fort de Bard, closing the Val d'Aosta, where the French can come down from the Little St. Bernard, is all that is required.

It is important to observe that in any Alpine war in which the Italians should stand on their defence, they would have every possible advantage over their adversaries, because all their Alpine valleys and streams, as well as their roads and railroads, concentrate upon Turin; so that from this main

point troops could be easily sent by rail and road to any spot on the long line of the mountain chain from which danger might threaten.

It is difficult to foresee what revolution the railway and the telegraph—when completed and in better order than they now are in Italy—may yet work in the whole system of modern warfare; but it seems natural to conceive that by the aid of these contrivances a considerable body of troops—say 50,000 men, chiefly light infantry—might be so cleverly handled, the line of the Alps might be so attentively watched, and the means of locomotion kept always so ready at hand, as to enable a skilful commander to meet with a superior force any column attempting to force its way through any of the Alpine defiles, ere it had time to deploy in the plain and to recover from the fatigue of its mountain journey. And by the application of the same plan on a larger scale, and removing the centre of operation to Milan or Piacenza, it ought to be possible with 150,000 or 200,000 men to hold at the same time Piedmont against France and Lombardy against Austria; indeed, to hold the whole northern plain as a mountain-girt citadel against all comers.

It is not equally easy to say what could be done were the ring-fence of the Alps to be broken through and the enemy to effect a lodgment anywhere in the open country. The Longobards of olden times, as history tells us, when Pepin or Charlemagne had driven them from the barriers of Val Susa made a

stand nowhere, but shut themselves up in their fortified cities of Pavia, Brescia, or Verona, till either adroit negotiation or ignominious surrender put an end to the campaign. The Italians of the renovated kingdom would, it is to be hoped, behave with more spirit. Still it is certain that an army which should prove unequal to the task of defending the hills would find it difficult to withstand the enemy's onset on level grounds, and the temptation to run for shelter to its strongholds would not be easily resisted by a people who, from the times of the Lombard League of the twelfth century to the siege of Rome and Venice in our own days, have always fought best behind stone walls.

Were the French the invaders, they must either come in along shore from Ventimiglia, or across the Cottian and Graian Alps into the plain of Piedmont. Along shore they would probably find the Riviera too rugged and too poor a country for a safe and rapid advance. It would be a necessity for them to carry the war into the plain of the Po either north or south, and most likely on both sides of that river, where they would move through a land bristling with fortresses and cut up by streams and marshes into strong military lines, where the ground might be disputed inch by inch. The North of Italy is, in fact, labouring under an *embarras de fortresses*, the keeping of which in time of peace and the manning of which in time of war is or would be so heavy a charge on the

State, that serious thoughts are entertained of only retaining those which may serve as *têtes de pont;* while others, and among them even the great Austrian stronghold of Verona, would be dismantled.

The subjugation of the North of Italy, even independently of the fortresses and merely owing to the strength of the natural positions, would be no easy work for the invader if the Italians showed a stout heart, and stood up in defence of the many lines of the Sesia, Ticino, Adda, Mincio, &c., on the left, and of the Tanaro, Scrivia, Trebbia, &c., on the right bank of the Po. Possibly, however, a wish to strike a decisive blow by marching upon the capital might induce the invaders to hurry through the plain, and masking the fortresses which might threaten their rear, attempt to force some of the passes of the Apennines—those from Parma, Reggio, Modena, or Bologna to Spezia, Lucca, or Pistoia, and thus, by a rapid progress through Peninsular Italy, put the strength of the projected fortified camp near Rome to the test. It would be a rash and altogether insane undertaking, were it not justified by the argument, that a nation incapable of arresting the onset of an enemy on his way through such obstacles as the North of Italy arrays against him, would be still less able to close in upon him, so as either to harass his advance or to cut off his retreat. Ever since Roman times, as I have said, possession of the North has invariably

empowered an invader not only to overrun the South, but even to withdraw from the South and march back across the North with impunity when the North had rallied in his rear in a hostile attitude, and it had become a necessity for him to cut his way through its united forces. The expedition of Charles VIII. and the battle of Fornovo at the end of the fifteenth century, are precedents against the reproduction of which it may become the duty of Italian strategists to guard.

Be it borne in mind that I have hitherto looked upon the subject as if there were not a maritime side to it—as if Italy were mistress of the seas, and had only to defend herself by land. And indeed there is no reason why she should not become one day the strongest naval power in the Mediterranean, fully able to guard her coasts and her islands from hostile aggression. But the unfortunate affair at Lissa has only too thoroughly cured the Italians of their conceit as to "their fleet being twice a match for that of Austria," and convinced them that little could be expected of any attempt on their part to confront the maritime forces of France. Without the mastery of the sea the defence of Italy becomes infinitely more complicated and arduous; a march of the French along the Riviera with a fleet sailing parallel to the land army and supplying it with all it might require, would no longer seem impracticable; the two railway lines of communication along shore, the one by Genoa and Leghorn to

Civita Vecchia, and the other by Rimini and Ancona to Brindisi, would be liable to interruption; and the country threatened at every seaport, and distracted by landing parties on every unprotected point along shore, would find it difficult to pursue the plan of operations necessary to repel the land attack.

As in the War Department, so in the Marine, Italy seems to have found the Minister she was long in quest of, the one that may best answer her need. Like General Ricotti, Admiral Saint-Bon is young in years, yet old by professional experience; he has talent, he has daring; and to judge from his first address to the Chamber of Deputies in the early part of last year's session, he is determined to "do or die."

The picture he drew of the present condition of the maritime forces of the country was truly appalling. "Italy," he said, "was behindhand in everything. Her iron-clads are not equal to the best foreign ones; several of them are altogether out of date; Italy has as yet no vessel fit for ocean navigation (*La nave oceanica non è ancor nata fra noi*). Italian ports are encumbered with ships of antiquated shape, old before their time, and only a few of them available for any purpose—equally unable to fight or run away." He thought that most of them should be sold, or, if unsaleable, should be burnt. He stated besides, that he "had officially visited Genoa, Naples, Leghorn, and other seaports, and had been 'frightened' by the sight of

so many cities and of so long a line of coast utterly unarmed, and exposed to the landing of an enemy." He might have added that the Navy, different in this respect from the Army, was demoralized by division, chiefly owing to the rivalry between the Genoese and Neapolitan naval schools, where amalgamation of provincial, or regional elements, and the formation of a national spirit, had as yet been found impracticable.

From all the Minister said or hinted, it was easy to infer that he intended that the Italian Navy should henceforth be looked upon as a mere defensive weapon for home service. The Italian flag would in a great measure disappear from the ocean, and all the activity of the few really serviceable iron-clads, either already at hand or to be procured, would be circumscribed within the limits of the Mediterranean, and confined to the immediate neighbourhood of the Peninsula and the adjoining islands. For the defence of the coasts, besides such help as could be expected from the vessels, he relied on the use of torpedo-boats, and on a complete line of fortifications; and held out splendid prospects for the improvement of the naval stations of Spezia and Taranto, as well as for the preservation and extension of the Arsenal of Venice, which, he said, "ought to be something better than a mere Mediæval Museum."

The views of the Italian Government, as represented by the two Ministers of War and Marine, are therefore restricted to a purely defensive policy:

the immediate object is to make safe both the land and sea border—the land chiefly and more immediately by Alpine fortresses, the sea-coast by torpedoes. If by such contrivances the country can be protected from a *coup de main*, so as to gain time for the mobilization of the army, it is expected that this latter will do its duty and meet danger from whatever quarter it may arise.

By their reluctance to adopt the Prussian system of provincial battalions, and by their abolition of whatever remained of the senseless institution of the National Guard,—a bad copy of a bad French model,—it seems evident that the Italian Government rely for the defence of the country on the soldiers, and make no account of mere citizens. Although the people throughout the Peninsula, and especially in the north, can be trained into good troops, it must be confessed that the Italians taken altogether, and especially in the cities, owing to deep-rooted habits engendered by the late Governments, are by no means as naturally hardy and enduring a race as might be wished, and not well suited to bear the hardships of march or bivouac, to say nothing of the actual perils of the battle-field. The little that had been done towards breathing a new spirit into the population by the institution of rifle clubs, shooting galleries, and choice volunteer battalions of mobilized guards, has come to nought. Little is to be hoped in Italy from a levy *en masse*. The Italian will do no more soldier's work than he can

help, and it will be fortunate for the country if he do not prefer brigand's work; for it would be vain to deny a party strongly opposed to the new order of things in Italy still exists, especially in the south, among the clergy and the ignorant peasantry subject to their influence; and although in normal times that party makes itself almost inaudible and would never venture into open outbreaks, still it could hardly be expected to remain inactive were a foreign flag and a hostile force thrown upon the coast in war times, to give ill-smothered rancour and vengeance encouragement, guidance and aid. It is with a view to overawe any disaffection likely to lead to an outbreak in the south that the Minister is contemplating the formation of an entrenched camp at Capua.

Both with respect to her army and to her fortifications by land and sea, and also to the aptitude and attitude of her people, it is evident, in short, that Italy is not in a condition to make her wish for a speedy outbreak of hostilities. Years must elapse to give even such modest plans of defence as her Ministers have laid out full development, and even that much cannot be achieved unless better order is introduced into the finance and the general administration of the country. Italy must learn to govern and to educate. Before she can hope to have an army, she must build up a State; before she attempts to muster her people into soldiers, she must make them men.

CHAPTER XIV.

ITALIAN FINANCE.

War and Finance—Italian Financiers: Sella; Minghetti—Financial Measures—Taxes—Expenses—Italian Morality—Municipalism—North and South—Retrenchment and Reform—The Octroi—Paper Currency—Public Faith—Mr. Boutwell and the Italians.

Up to the year 1866, or even 1870, it would have been idle in Italy to talk of economy. It was the Government's business to find money, and apparently not the Parliament's duty to look into accounts. The country was arming for inevitable conflicts, and the Chambers voted "Provisional Budgets," or, in other words, gave the Ministers *carte blanche*, and invested them with full and absolute financial powers. The consequence was that Custozza was lost and Venetia won; the Pope made himself infallible and was deprived of his earthly sovereignty; Italy was one from the Alps to the sea, but she had incurred liabilities the charge of which amounted to two-thirds of her income.

But now at last the thing was done; Italy had come to the end of her banquet, and there was the bill to be paid. Retrenchment should now be the order of the day. The office of the Minister of War

should become a sinecure, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer should reign supreme.

But alas! such are not the views of the Italian people, or of their rulers. The Italians are still haunted by that same undefinable yet irrepressible feeling of insecurity which has hitherto made them accept yet mistrust their good fortune. A breath has made, and they think a breath can unmake them. With so fickle, so envious, so overbearing a neighbour as France they can never be easy in their minds. They must have an army; and because the Minister of War in the Lanza Cabinet, General Ricotti, inspired them with confidence that he would help them to an army, they, *i. e.*, a majority recruited among all parties in the Chamber and the public cry out of doors, supported him against the Finance Minister, Sella, who proposed retrenchment, and not only overthrew Sella with his other colleagues, but insisted that whoever might be the successors of Sella and the other members of the Lanza Administration, the portfolio of the War Department should be entrusted to no other hands than General Ricotti's.

The whole military and naval expenditure, ordinary and extraordinary, of the kingdom of Italy, if we look to mere figures—9,080,000*l.*—is nothing very extravagant,—not much more than one-third of what England has to pay for her army and navy, and less than half what France consecrates to the same luxuries. But before we make out whether

Italy can afford even that, before we decide whether she can spend more, we must know what proportion her revenue bears to those of England and France.

Before Sella succumbed in his controversy with the War Minister he was considered the ablest financier that Italy could boast since Cavour. Had he been gifted with the *prestige* of Cavour, as he had much of Cavour's genius and more than his firmness, had he been the one, the all-powerful Minister, Quintino Sella would have been, as he may still be, Italy's best safeguard against bankruptcy. For a long time he had been at loggerheads with the other members of the Administration. He had engaged to restore a balance in the budget, and proposed to achieve his object by various means—by a reform in the administration of his own department, especially with respect to the collection of taxes; by the imposition of new taxes and the further development of existing ones; finally, by the reduction of the expenditure, and the application of a system of strict economy in every branch of the public service. He is a man of unwearied energy and undaunted courage, and he was able, single-handed, to bring up millions of arrears of taxes which had been long due and the collection of which was despaired of. He introduced something like order, simplicity, and, above all, justice and equality in the assessment of public burdens, and exerted himself to raise new imposts with such good

results, that the ordinary revenue, which was only 34,554,000*l.* in 1869, rose to 41,760,000*l.* in 1873; exhibiting thus an increase of 7,206,000*l.* in four years, of which only 1,500,000*l.* was due to the annexation of Rome and her province in 1870, leaving thus as net financial improvement a sum of 5,706,000*l.*

Thus far the fulfilment of Sella's programme rested on his own exertions, and he was as good as his words. But he hoped to square accounts and in a few years to do away with the deficit, and with that view he contemplated a reduction in the expenditure for which he had to reckon with his colleagues, and chiefly with him of the War Office and the one at the head of the Department of Public Works. The new expenses proposed by these two Ministers had been voted by the Chamber, and it was owing to the necessity of meeting this unforeseen demand on his resources that Sella brought forward those "financial measures" (*Provvedimenti Finanziarii*) from which he anticipated an increase in the revenue of 1,200,000*l.* His proposal, even modified so as to reduce that sum to 560,000*l.*, was rejected, and the Minister, together with the whole Lanza Cabinet, Ricotti excepted, retired.

The finances, together with the Presidency of the Council, came into the hands of Minghetti. The Lanza Ministry had been beaten on a financial question, and beaten by Minghetti, who belonged to the Ministerial party and who had been more

than once Finance Minister. The consequence, upon every imaginable Parliamentary rule and principle, was that Minghetti should be summoned to form a new Cabinet, and that in the new combination he should take Sella's place as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Minghetti however had weighty reasons for objecting to that course. He is a man of brilliant faculties and of very extensive knowledge and ability. He is both fluent and logical in debate, and knows how to speak both *fortiter* and *suaviter*. He is jovial, sociable, versatile, well acquainted with the strong as well as the weak side of the men he has to deal with,—a very Palmerston among Italian statesmen. But as a Minister of Finance he had been in former instances only half successful. People had not forgotten how ten years before he had appeared in the Chamber with a financial statement in which he declared that if the Chamber would allow him to contract a loan of 28,000,000*l.*, he would, in four years, relieve the Treasury of its embarrassments, and achieve a *pareggio*,—*i.e.*, establish the "balance" between the revenue and the expenditure,—the great desideratum of all Italian budgets since the formation of the new kingdom. Minghetti fell before one-half of the period of four years had elapsed, and it was found not only that the condition of the Treasury was not improved, but that the financial resources of the kingdom were at the lowest ebb. Sensible persons were of course willing to take into

consideration the arduous circumstances in which the country was placed and which put all sound economical measures out of the question. But the public at large simply looked at the result and accepted no explanation, so that Minghetti resumed his seat as a meré deputy in the Chamber, and as a financier *manqué*.

In his consciousness of this strong prejudice against him, Minghetti, when summoned by the King to form a Ministry, showed the utmost anxiety to avoid taking the irksome burden of the Finance Department upon himself. He addressed as many of his friends and even adversaries as he could think of, in a vain hope that the obnoxious portfolio might pass from him to some one else. But he was unable to come to terms with any of them; and as the only alternative was to renounce the formation of the Ministry, he resolved upon taking the pill which had caused him so much loathing and misgiving.

As a financier, Minghetti, who had unseated Sella, began, as was inevitable, by reproducing Sella's ideas. He insisted upon two main points: first, that as in his opinion, under present circumstances, the expenditure admitted of no material reduction, it should at least on no account be suffered to increase; and, second, that the revenue should be raised till a balance was established by a series of financial measures, a first batch of which, intended to yield 2,000,000*l.*,

should be voted during the Session which was then opening.

With respect to the first proposal, the Prime Minister found himself in opposition to his two colleagues, of War and of Public Works — the former who wanted money for works of fortification, the latter who needed it for improvement of some of the seaports.

With regard to the financial measures, consisting of the creation of new taxes and the aggravation of some of those already in existence, he had of course to overcome the resistance which such proposals usually meet on the part of the representatives of the tax-payers, sometimes independently of the views they entertain on general political subjects.

The Minister's good fortune, however, and the obvious necessity of relieving the distress of the Treasury, so far prevailed in the Chamber that most of the measures proposed by him were voted, though in some instances by a feeble majority. But the main efforts of the Opposition were concentrated against the last of Minghetti's proposals—that which declared the "nullity of unstamped and unregistered acts"—the most important and on grounds of public morality the least objectionable of the financial measures.

There existed laws in Italy subjecting private contracts and other acts to a stamp and registration duty. These laws were evaded to such an extent

that the tax yielded yearly 360,000*l.* less than could be fairly expected from it. A certain number of citizens robbed the finance—that is, robbed their fellow-citizens—to that amount. It was natural that the Government should wish to enforce the law, and the Bill was brought forward to that effect. The moral result of the measure might be argued from the fact that the mere discussion of the Bill and the apprehension of its success caused the payment of arrears of the tax to the amount of 80,000*l.* in three days. The Bill was only a first step towards a financial reform of vital importance to the country. It is not merely the stamp and registration duty that many Italians manage to evade. Taxation under any shape is naturally enough unpleasant to them, and the Government must find the means of making them pay whether they will or not. Without a more equitable assessment and a more regular collection of the taxes, reform in the financial system of the kingdom of Italy is hopeless. The quibbles with which Minghetti's measure was combated were mere pretexts which deceived no man. The real objection lay in this, that people who had hitherto cheated the revenue with impunity took the Bill as an intimation that they would no longer be allowed to do so. They did not like the coercion and resisted it, either by an unnatural league of incongruous parties against the Government, or by a base desertion of their colours. I have heard of a Roman noble of very high rank—one of the few

who joined the national movement from the beginning and who has invariably supported the present Administration, yet who absented himself from the Chamber at the division, observing that "if the tax were to be enforced, his family would be called upon to pay hundreds of thousands of lire in arrears."

The Bill was defeated by a majority of one against the Government, 166 against 165 deputies; that is, one more than half the representatives of the nation virtually sanctioned the Advocate Mancini's declaration that "the non-payment of a tax was no fraud." They have done their utmost to confirm the Italian people in their notion that only those who wish need pay the taxes; or, in other words, that "base is the slave who pays." To make matters infinitely more discreditable to the Parliament, this final vote, which was taken by ballot, and was decisive against the Government, came in succession to other open votes by which the Chamber had resolved by a majority of 11 that the discussion of the clauses of the Bill should be proceeded with, and had supported the most important and substantial of these clauses by majorities of 12 and 16; when, therefore, the measure could fairly have been considered safe.

The Minister Minghetti, justly indignant, declared that "as Parliament would not vote new supplies, it should not sanction new expenses," and he proposed to withdraw the Bill for works to be done in the harbours of Naples, Castellamare, Palermo,

Girgenti and Venice. The Bill amounted to a mere trifle, 240,000*l.*, to be distributed over a series of four years' budgets; but the principle involved the credit and character of the Government and here again the Government was defeated; the withdrawal of the Bill was negatived and its articles were passed one by one, the Ministers being deserted by a large number of their usual supporters, and overwhelmed by the vote of the deputies whose constituencies were interested in the proposed works.

The Government however had a chance of retrieving their fortunes in the Senate, where the Bill was introduced after the public conscience had expressed itself very loudly in condemnation of the conduct of the Chamber, especially with respect to the rejection of the Bill for Annulling Unstamped and Unregistered Acts. The Senate reversed the vote of the Chamber both with respect to the Bill for the Southern Harbours, and also for that sanctioning the expense of 3,140,000*l.* on works of fortifications; showing thus for the first time in the Parliamentary annals of the young Italian kingdom that the maxim that "no money should be spent when there is none to spend" begins at last to be understood and acted upon.

This short account of the transactions which led to the two crises of 1873 and 1874, to the first of which Lanza succumbed, and the second of which Minghetti survived, gives a sufficient idea of the

main obstacles against which any attempt at financial improvement in Italy has to contend. The Italians are heavily taxed, no doubt; but the weight of their burdens would not be so great if it pressed equally upon them all. But the notion to a great extent seems to be that "only fools pay." The Chancellor of the Exchequer in Italy is seldom if ever troubled with communications of repentant defaulters sending him "conscience money." He has to deal with a race of men who have for centuries been accustomed to look upon the Government as their worst enemy, on taxation as public robbery, and on laws as arbitrary and iniquitous decrees which it was wisdom to evade and heroism to resist. The Italians are a docile, intelligent people and by no means less honest than their neighbours. They will not do what is wrong when they understand and feel it to be so; but their ideas about such things have long been perverted by lay and religious instructors. They have been taught to yield to force and they have learnt to fall back upon fraud. It is only by just and equal laws—laws which they feel sure can neither be resisted nor evaded—that the race can be regenerated. In the matter of finance, the Italian must be told that he is to pay—pay to the uttermost farthing that he owes, and he will do it when he is satisfied that payment will equally be exacted without distinction from his fellow-subjects.

Unfortunately there have been hitherto in Italy

greater alacrity and profusion in making laws than strictness and regularity in seeing them respected and executed. Parliament, for instance, to speak of minor matters, voted a law for a stamp duty on receipts; yet receipts to any amount are given in Rome, under the eyes of the Government, without stamps. It is not likely that Minghetti, when he settles his tailor's bill, perceives that the document handed to him is unstamped; but it is even less probable that if he noticed it, he as a customer would remonstrate with the tradesman, whom as a Minister he would be bound to prosecute. In the same manner it is enacted that a stamp should be affixed to every bill, written or printed, stuck up at the street corners. Yet many unstamped bills are daily and hourly pasted up in Rome, that "he who runs may read"—pasted up, as the case may be, at the very doors of the Palace of Monte Citorio, as if in actual mockery and defiance of the Legislator. There is a laxity in the execution of public duties in this country, the result of which is to encourage the disregard of private ones.

Among a people prone to cheat the Government in such mere trifles, how can it be expected that taxes depending for productiveness on fairness of self-assessment, like the Income-Tax, or *Imposta sulla Ricchezza Mobile*, may realize the estimates of the financier? That throughout the country there are people who pay and people who do not is a misfortune; but the worst is that it is a general

opinion in the North that while it is itself performing its obligations, the South escapes almost scot-free. It was owing to this alleged remissness of the Neapolitans and Sicilians in the discharge of their own part of the common duty that scenes of great violence arose in the debate of some of the Bills at the close of the Session. The two southern kingdoms, it was contended, are those who contribute the least and exact the most; and as a matter of fact it may be stated that the Bill "Annulling Unstamped and Unregistered Acts," which was intended as a cure against the evasion of fiscal laws, was lost chiefly owing to the opposition of the southern deputies; and that the Bill for the improvement of seaports, which was almost entirely benefiting the southern provinces, was carried in the teeth of the Government simply in consequence of an overwhelming southern vote.

But wherever the defaulters may be, it is certain that a Minister who could manage to make *all* Italians pay *all* they owe, might be considered a true benefactor to his country, inasmuch as he could thus not only put an end to the financial distress, but also soothe in this respect those angry and jealous feelings which the non-payment of taxes fosters among the people of the various provinces and regions, and which have lately assumed a bitterness boding no good to the future peace and harmony of the newly-united kingdom.

In the midst of the storm which these invidious

comparisons between the North and South raised in the Chamber, the Sicilian Deputy, Crispi, was heard to say that "Southern Italy came naked into the hands of her northern sister, and that it was the duty of this latter to clothe her." By all means if the money were forthcoming; but there is a limit to the resources of any community, and Italy, almost exclusively an agricultural country, has lately been suffering from a succession of bad harvests. Her prosperity has in a great measure kept pace with the severe taxation, and a certain development of industry and trade is perceptible even in the most backward and benighted Neapolitan provinces. Still the "nakedness" of that southern land is a source of great trouble to the whole country, and what has been done is little in comparison with what remains to be done. There exists happily no trace of the former rancours and animosities between the various races of united Italy, but a clashing of material interests between the different localities is inevitable; and it is felt that since the installation of the seat of government in Rome, the southern element which has invaded Parliament exercises a pressure on the Ministers which the wavering support of the northern division of the country does not enable them to withstand. The Neapolitans and Sicilians are aware of the power of their numbers, and are bent on making the most of their advantage. It is thus that last year, availing themselves of their geographical position and tarrying in Rome till the

heat or mere dislike of the place drove many of their northern brethren from the capital, they carried a Bill allowing 1,840,000*l.* for roads in their southern provinces; this year they have been storming for the grant of a large sum for the construction of a military harbour and naval station at Taranto; and again in the projected convention for a fusion of the Roman with the southern railway companies, they defeated the Government scheme by their endeavours to impose their own terms on the contracting parties.

The hope of Italy lies in the influence that may be eventually exercised by that patriotic party who advise the rejection of every project involving new expenses till the balance in the State accounts be established. Practically however the country hardly knows to what extent she may be committed even by the mere completion of the works in progress, the cost of which is very clumsily estimated: for instance, the Palace of the Ministry of Finance now rising near Porta Pia, and intended for the accommodation of 4,000 *employés*,—one of Sella's most egregious follies, and for which he only asked a grant of 280,000*l.*,—has already cost 500,000*l.*, and will, ere it is finished, absorb at least twice that sum.

The corruption and disorder which had sunk so deeply into every department of the public service in the southern districts under Bourbon rule is rapidly tainting the whole administration of the

Italian kingdom, while any reform tending to introduce order and economy is obstructed by the preponderance of those very southern provinces where reform is most sorely needed. The same causes which interfere with the increase of the revenue equally oppose the reduction of the expenditure. Signor Minghetti lately said, with very good reason, that "no retrenchment could be attempted by any Minister not entrusted with the exercise of full powers." Italy is still burdened with four unnecessary Courts of Cassation and twenty-two Courts of Appeal. It maintains twenty-one universities, and has added to the number that of Rome, which is as yet a failure for many reasons, but especially because the expensiveness of living drives both students and professors from the capital. The number of dioceses is six times larger than that of Spain and more than three times that of France; and there are still provinces like that of Grosseto from which the prefect and all his staff could be conveniently removed, to say nothing of sub-prefects, who, in the opinion of all men of sense, are only performing the office of a fifth wheel in the chariot of the provincial administration.

Against any reform of that nature however the jealousy of petty municipal interests arrays itself. Even the income of a bishop, or of a chapter of canons, the salary of a sub-prefect, or of a batch of magistrates, or of the rector and masters of an academy, is supposed to yield profit and to confer

lustre upon a second or third rate locality. Upon the slightest hint of a sweeping measure being contemplated those municipal interests, which are only too faithfully represented in Parliament, are up in arms. No Minister can withstand the uproar arising from the discussion of these "belfry politics," or make himself heard above the "chime of all the steeples"; and any scheme of retrenchment is abandoned on the ground that after all the saving would be too inconsiderable to be worth the commotion its proposal would not fail to create.

These are the ordinary drawbacks of a constitutional *régime* in most countries. The statesman whose duty it is to consider the general welfare has to withstand the league of innumerable local interests. His chance lies in setting one division of the country against the other—in the case of Italy the North against the South; but it is a Machiavellian policy, and a game fraught with dangers of a far more serious nature than any disorder in the finance would be.

Far more grievous than the amount of the public burdens in Italy is their nature, for there is hardly an unwise, inhuman, unpopular, or even immoral tax to which the Government in its endeavours to make both ends meet has not been compelled to resort; and one need only mention the duty on salt, the Grist-Tax, and the Public Lottery. But perhaps the most grievous, because the most stupid, financial institution in the country is the duty on consump-

tion, the French contrivance of the *Octroi*, levied at the gates of every city and even of the most insignificant towns and boroughs. No less than 460 different articles, most of them of the first necessity, such as meat, wine, eggs, butter, poultry, hay, corn, bricks, stones, &c., are thus grievously mulcted; but the objection rises not so much against the tax itself as against the clumsy, costly and vexatious way of its collection—interfering with the public traffic and movement of the country—and still more against the circumstance that the duties are in a great measure imposed by the municipal authorities of every locality, with this result, that while in the more intelligent North matters conducive to the development of public industry are either lightly taxed or altogether exempt from duty, in the South, as for instance in Naples, the heaviest duties are laid on lime, iron, &c., with utter disregard of all sound economical principles. Government is devising remedies for the evil; but in the meanwhile the evil exists, and nothing more melancholy can be imagined than the fact that in a country which has so happily rid itself of inland custom-houses, where the principles of Free Trade have been so readily and so thoroughly admitted, and where these principles regulate the tariffs at the frontier of the kingdom, trade should thus be hindered and hampered at the gate of every town by an inconsistent and bewildering system of old-fashioned, illiberal burdens. These anomalies in

the *Octroi* tariffs will it is to be hoped eventually be removed, but as to the abominable *Octroi* itself, it will be long, I fear, before it is "reformed" altogether.

Neither is it certain as yet that any great mitigation to another of the worst evils of the country—the paper currency—will be effected by the working of the Bill on the subject which has now become law. Paper money was one of the many desperate expedients to which the Italian Government resorted when pressed by the necessities of the war of 1866. They might simply have issued Government paper, but they preferred to give a forced currency to notes issued by the former "National Bank of Sardinia," which has since assumed the name of "National Bank of the Kingdom of Italy." As other banks in Italy—the Roman, the Tuscan, and those of Naples and Sicily—were likewise "national," they had also to be allowed to issue notes as legal tender, but with circulation limited to their respective town, province, or region. As besides the issue of the paper was originally limited to notes of five lire and upwards, the consequence was the immediate and almost total disappearance of the small change, an evil to which an even worse remedy was found in the institution of a great number of petty local trade and popular banks, issuing notes of 1 lira, 50 c., and 25 c., which had no acknowledged value and depended on public confidence for their circulation.

The confusion between *Corso Forzoso*, *Corso Legale* and *Corso Fiduciario*, and the frequent breaking of the popular institutions of credit, gave rise to a succession of panics, and led to so great a depreciation of the whole currency that gold rose to 16 and 17 per cent. premium; an English sovereign worth 25 lire could be exchanged for 29 to 30 lire, and even copper coins were in certain cases at a premium of 13 per cent.

The measure by which these inconveniences are to be obviated consists chiefly of an arrangement between the six State banks of the country, forming them into a *consorzio* or partnership on a perfectly equal footing, and empowering them to issue notes to the amount of 1,000,000,000 lire, or 40,000,000*l.*, which are to have a forced currency, and to be to all intents and purposes Government money, but under the joint guarantee both of the Government and all and each of the six banks.

Besides these *Biglietti Consorziali*, or joint-stock notes, each of the banks will be empowered to issue special notes on its own account, which will have legal currency throughout the country. These notes must differ from the others both in the colour of the paper and in the value they represent. As notes to the amount of 50 c. and upwards will be supplied by these banks in sufficient quantity, the business of the popular banks will be at an end, and their notes are to be withdrawn from circulation.

The circulation of paper money will thus undoubtedly be simplified and somewhat limited. Still it is greatly to be regretted that the Government has not been willing or able to break off all connexion with the banks, issuing the paper on its own undivided responsibility, and giving that paper alone the privilege of either forced or legal currency. Still more unfortunate it was that if the Government thought it could not transact its own business without the aid of a bank, it should not have taken this opportunity to organize a *bonâ fide* national institution on the plan of the Bank of England or Bank of France, reducing all the other State banks to the condition of mere private enterprises. But "belfry" interests and personal influences interfered in this, as in so many other matters, with the rules of wise policy; and, of course, the Government could only ensure the good-will and co-operation of so many institutions of credit by allowing them advantages which will embolden their enterprise, and probably endanger their soundness. The Bill was, however, on the whole, favourably received, and its result has hitherto been a slight but constant fall in the rate of exchange.

The truth is that the Italian people, at no time deficient in financial intelligence, and actuated by patriotic instincts, submitted from the first to the nuisance of a paper currency with a praiseworthy resignation, and they welcome with ready confidence any measure tending to rid trade of its trammels.

We shall have occasion to see that although paper money in its consequences upon the general welfare of the country is a terrible evil, still it is not in some respects without its beneficial influence.

But the measures which did Italian credit by far the greatest harm, and which were hardly justified either by the necessities which prompted them or by any solid advantage that accrued from them, were those by which the foreign holders of Italian Rentes were made to pay 13½ per cent. income tax, and to produce affidavits of their *bonâ fide* possession of their coupons, in order to receive their dividends in gold instead of the paper with which they were paid to Italian subjects. This was resented as a breach of contract everywhere beyond the Alps; it sunk the funds of the kingdom 20 per cent., and very nearly led to the expunging of "Italians" from the lists of all European stock-exchanges. These were among those political blunders which statesmen should avoid as more damaging than crimes, and to make matters worse, they followed close upon those transactions respecting the Cavour Canals and the City of Milan improvements, in which the Italian national or municipal authorities treated foreign capitalists in a manner which, if it was strictly legal, was at least not generous, and was universally denounced as "sharp practice."

Few can have forgotten the wrath which was kindled throughout Italy by a speech of Mr. Boutwell, the distinguished Senator of the United States,

in which he placed Italy with respect to credit on a par with Spain, Turkey and other "dishonoured" European States. Still there is no doubt that, judging by the standard of European nations, Italy is, after Spain, Turkey, and perhaps Austria, the State which has most lamely fulfilled its obligations. It may be pleaded that in these financial matters Italy has acted under the pressure of a stern necessity; that she had to contend with formidable adverse circumstances—preparing for war against a military Power of the first order; reorganizing the Royal and absorbing the Volunteer army; pensioning off set after set of worthless reactionary or revolutionary officials; achieving public works in districts where everything was to be done; borrowing money on the most onerous terms and dealing with extortionate, dilatory and disappointing contractors; and finally building up three capitals one after another, and submitting to those "three removals" which in domestic economy are held tantamount to "a fire,"—in short, going through the ordeal of outlays to which her resources were utterly inadequate; but although this explains it does not excuse dishonesty, nor can mere flat denial be accepted as full justification. The plea that Italy has only taken a lamb, while some of her neighbours have stolen a sheep, will not be admitted; and the Italians are wrong if they hope to refute Mr. Boutwell's statements by a retort of the charge upon the Americans themselves, or by the assertion that there

are or have been rogues among the public men in America, while Italian Ministers have hitherto enjoyed an unblemished character. All these are matters beside the mark. It may be true that "if Italy possessed only half the resources which the American Union had at its disposal, she would already have resumed specie payments"; but it is quite certain that there is something in the dogged resolution with which America went to work to heal the wounds inflicted by the most disastrous of all civil wars, something in the sacrifices she endured with a view to wipe off her debt and to withdraw her paper from circulation, that might convey some salutary hints to the Italians, and lay before them an example worthy of imitation.

But the fact is that the Italians do not willingly accept such lessons; that as a nation they are still very young, and as such, tender and thin-skinned almost to a greater degree than the Americans themselves. They have been so long petted and spoilt by their sympathizers that they look upon any remark on their failings, however just and friendly, as a proof of prejudice and ill-will. It does not seem to strike them that in pointing out their short-comings Mr. Boutwell, or any other stranger, or any countryman of their own, may be actuated by the best feelings; that he may have love enough in his heart to wish for the good of all men; that he may look upon human progress as a common object, to which the advancement of every

nation should be made to tend; and that nothing can more efficiently contribute to that advancement than the frank, outspoken expression, not only of national but of international public opinion. It is no use arguing. There is something morbid in the excessive susceptibility of the Italians and in their intolerance of unpleasant truths. They are, as I think I said before, "cats who must not be rubbed the wrong way of the hair." Whatever is spoken to their praise is welcome, but anything which may seem to be said to their disparagement, however true, however well-meant, is resented as slander and outrage, and denounced as the result either of gross stupidity or dire malice.

A critic fares with them as the famous Herr Urian of the German song, who entertained his unsophisticated countrymen with the result of his survey of mankind from China to Peru. So long as he only abused other nations, so long as he only held up the Antipodes to ridicule, his hearers were tickled with the conceit that they were so much better than their fellow-mortals, and they urged the travelled gentleman to give them more of his shrewd experiences. But when the Herr concluded that he had found other men on the whole just such a pack of fools and knaves as he had left behind him at home in his own country, the burden instantly changed, and his audience would hear him no further.

The Italians however, to do them justice, do not

presume to be better than other men. Theoretically, it is enough for them if they are no worse. Yet practically, in matters of public faith they resent comparison with those Turks, Spaniards and Austrians, on whose financial system they have to some extent modelled their own.

CHAPTER XV.

ITALIAN WEALTH.

Italian Trade—Italian Wine—Former and Present Cultivation—Piedmont—Asti—Italian Œnologists—Barolo—Chianti—Orvieto and Montefiascone—Valtellina—Marsala—Old and New Prices—Statistics—Italian Wine Trade—Oil and Silk—Italian Cattle—Labouring Cattle—Cattle Breeding—Agricultural Economy.

ITALY has had no war since 1866, and she has been visited with no great disasters. Still it is a country which "has suffered losses." Hail-storms, droughts, inundations, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, and the more extensive and enduring scourges of the grape and silk disease have tried her severely, and no doubt greatly retarded the development of that prosperity to which as a united country she is entitled to aspire. The latest returns of her foreign trade are by no means encouraging:—

The Imports amounted,	in 1872,	to 1,186,611,328 lire.
„ „	in 1873,	„ 1,286,652,965 „
The Exports were,	in 1872,	1,167,201,219 „
„ „	in 1873,	1,133,161,137 „

There was, therefore, an increase in the imports of 100,041,637 lire, and a decrease in the exports of

34,040,082 lire, or a total falling off in the activity of the national trade of 134,081,719 lire, or 5,363,268*l.*

A succession of bad harvests, and the difficulties arising from the paper currency, involving an ever rising price of the gold necessary for the payment of foreign goods, must account for this; for otherwise the agricultural wealth of Italy, especially as a producer of wine, oil and silk, is in itself almost sufficient to make her a thriving community, and the symptoms of general improvement wrought by the late political changes in those and in all branches of cultivation are everywhere apparent.

Thirty years ago it was said and thought that there were no wines in Italy. The landlord of your Grand Hotel in Milan, Turin, or Florence placed before you a decanter of *vin ordinaire* or *vino da pasto*, for which there was nothing to pay, unless it was the doctor's bill; and as the only alternative the host produced a "List of Wines," in which you had a choice of names, from *Champagne Vaudois* to *Tokay Imperial*, and for a bottle of which you were charged from two to five times the price of your dinner. Of good or even tolerable *vin du pays* your host professed to have no knowledge, for even the elasticity of his conscience did not allow him to sell it at more than twice or three times the 15c. to 25c. a bottle which was its market price, and no considerable profit could be made out of it except by producing it under the masquerade of a foreign flask and label.

All the traveller was ever allowed to know about Italian wines, if he was very inquisitive, was that a luscious *Aleatico* was to be had at the grocers' at Florence, that *Lachryma Christi* was used by the priest at mass in Naples, and that a German bishop had drunk himself to death with the *Vino dell' Est* at Montefiascone. The Italians themselves, whatever drinks they might have for home consumption, treated each other in festive days with *Cyprus* or *Malaga*, liquids which would have defied Liebig's analysis, but the chief ingredients of which, besides sugar, seemed to be turpentine and brimstone.

And yet in those days grape diseases were unknown; half the produce of the vineyard was often left to rot on the branch from insufficiency of vats, tubs and casks to contain the plentiful vintage; wine had to be sold within sight of the ground where it grew; and the peasant at the fair managed to get drunk upon a beverage which cost him 5 c. or 6 c. a quart. Taken as a whole, the country not only sold no wine, but imported foreign produce at a rate which it could ill afford. Yet there was no lack of good wine in Italy even in olden times. Your plain country gentleman, if you ever broke that ice of shyness which made him inhospitable, pledged you in a liquor of which, when you had expressed your approval, he begged you to guess the extraction, but for the birthplace of which

he in the end triumphantly pointed to the sunny hill-side before his window.

All this is changed now; the country has a name and so have its productions; and the notion that Italy has more wine than she wants and that she can make it as good as she wishes, begins to gain ground even in the most reluctant minds. The landlord of your Grand Hotel is convinced that he can afford to be patriotic. His *carte des vins* has a national as well as a foreign column, and he allows you, out of a list of twenty or thirty *vini nostrali*, a bottle for which he dares not charge more than the price of the dinner.

The growth of good wine in Italy, or at least the fame into which good wine arose, seemed to keep pace with the development of national life. The world heard at first only of Piedmontese wines. About twenty years ago mention occurred in the *Times* of *Barolo*, *Barbera*, *Grignolino*, and other Subalpine produce, which, it was stated, had no cause to dread a comparison with the most generous Burgundian growth; and the London wine-merchants who travelled to Turin to test the correctness of that report were satisfied that they had not been led into error as to quality, though the quantity could not at that time meet the exigencies of the trade. Since then Italy has been afflicted with every variety of agricultural calamity. The havoc from grape and silk diseases has been for several years so great as to threaten the utter desertion of

the soil, and in many districts, both of Piedmont and Liguria, vineyards which then fell out of cultivation have never again been taken in hand by their disheartened owners. But a reaction against despondency is now rapidly setting in.

There was a province in Piedmont, the county of Asti, already somewhat known for its sparkling white wine and *Malvasia*, the hills of which either altogether escaped, or were the last to be ravaged and the first to recover from the *crittogama*. There the traditional skill of the wine-grower not only contrived to outlive the darkest period of the national disaster, but to make the best of it. The Asti vintners grew rich while the country round them thirsted, and when better days dawned they found themselves provided with the means both of improving their produce and of taking it to the proper market; so that the *Barbera*, *Barolo*, *Nebbiolo*, *Brachetto*, *Grignolino*, and all other varieties of wines which are the common produce of Piedmont, are usually sold as Asti wines.

An Œnological Society, promoting the establishment of model vineyards, has for several years been flourishing in the neighbourhood of Asti, and as the crop of the vines in the north of the Peninsula, owing to the inclemency of the season, was last autumn very scanty, the Society imported by rail thousands of cart-loads of Neapolitan grapes, the juice of which will make at least as good Asti wine as the best of home-growth,—a signal instance of the economical

advantages Italy has gained from political union. In imitation of this chief association other *Società Vinicole*, or *Enologiche*, have been everywhere springing up in Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia, Tuscany, and lately in Venetia, giving rise to the very natural idea that by a division of labour between the wine-grower, the wine-maker and the wine-merchant, the interests of all parties could best be consulted, and the "type" or standard of the various provincial or regional wines of Italy be established—a great desideratum with those who have an eye to extensive exportation.

The subject being thus attended to from an enlarged and enlightened point of view, people have soon come to a conclusion that there are and have always been excellent wines in Italy, and that if they had hitherto little chance of competing with foreign rivals, it was only because their reputation was local and in a great measure domestic.

In Piedmont, besides the low range of hills of the Asti and Montferrat region, all the valleys of the Alps, and especially the provinces of Ivrea, Aosta, and Valsesia, are recovering their former activity, and there is to be found in most inns in the north of Italy a *Gattinara Amaro Vecchione* as full-bodied as that *Grignolino* which enjoyed the favour of the late Archbishop of Turin, Monsignor Franzoni, who solaced with it the weariness of his exile at Lyons, preferring it to the *Nuits* or *Chambertin* of the choicest Burgundian cellars which he had at hand.

The tendency to uniformity, however, is to give all Piedmontese wine sold out of Piedmont the standard and name of *Barolo*.

Tuscany, which two centuries ago, if we may believe the learned physician and poet, Redi, was chosen by Bacchus for his favourite abode, and where he crowned *Montepulciano* as "the king of all wines," is making nearly as much by her flasks of *Chianti* as Piedmont by her bottles of *Barolo*. The wine trade which the Florentine nobles monopolized and carried on by retail at their palace doors, is now assuming the proportions of a national and international commerce. Almost every flask of wine in Val d'Arno goes by the name of *Chianti*, and every cellar is striving to bring its wine up to the type of Baron Ricasoli's *Brolio*, the name of which is the best passport to foreign markets.

Rome and Venice have come late into the connexion with their sisters of the Italian kingdom; the reputation of *Conegliano*, *Polesella*, and other excellent Venetian bottles has had little time to spread, and not much is known by untravelled wine-fanciers even about those flasks of *Orvieto* and *Montefiascone*, which were till so lately a cardinal's luxury.

After all, wines "have their destinies" as well as books. A king can make a particular wine the fashion at Court and throughout a kingdom as easily as an Imperial lady can impose the crinoline or chignon upon a whole womankind. Most wares rise to at least their proper value, and some of them

are even greatly over-rated, if they are buoyed up by a propitious tide of trade, and there is perhaps no article on which people are more thoroughly swayed by other people's taste than their drink. The names of some heroes are obscure, "*carent quia vate sacro*," and the growth of some vineyards is neglected because it suits the interest of no wine-dealer to make it known. Up to the end of the eighteenth century Valtellina was a political dependency of the Swiss Canton of the Grisons. At that time German wine was almost unknown, and both Switzerland and the country to the north of it were only too glad of a bottle from that rugged but sunny valley of the Adda. This export wine-trade from Valtellina, which owing to mere political connexion was then established, continued long after the tie was severed and continues at the present day, so that at Vienna and Munich, as well as at Coire or Bern, you have in all the hotel wine-lists your *Valtellina* or *Veltlin*, for which you are only charged three or four francs, but which, if you know anything about it, you prefer to many of the thin and sour *heimers*, for which you are made to pay three and four times the figure.

That the Val Levantina, Val Sesia, Val d'Aosta, and the whole Alpine region could produce as good stuff as the Val d'Adda did not hitherto penetrate Swiss or German heads, though no doubt much of the wine which is sold as *Veltlin* may happen to grow a little to the east or to the west of the favoured valley.

In the same manner, it was merely owing to the continental blockade of the First Napoleon, and to the circumstance that France, Italy, and for some time Spain, Portugal and Germany, were closed against Great Britain, that the attention of English speculators was turned to the wines of Sicily; and strange to say, the favour which the wines of Marsala, Siracusa, Bronte and Gerace from sheer necessity found with English palates, so enhanced their value in the estimation of the Italian people, that while hardly any other native wine fetches more than three or four lire a bottle, *Marsala* is sold at wine-shops at six lire, and served out at the table of the rich as a supreme luxury. It is true that the *Marsala* which is sold everywhere in Italy is pure juice of the grape, or nearly so, and it has at all events nothing in common with some of the abominably adulterated stuff which goes by the same name in England.

The immediate consequence of the impulse given to trade has been, of course, increased demand, and with it a proportionate rise in prices, and this applies to all agricultural produce as well as to wine. There are still people in Italy and elsewhere willing to abide by the maxim, "Happy is the nation that has no trade," in whose opinion high prices and heavy taxes are unmitigated evils, not to be compensated by the affluence of wealth, the development of industry and the advancement of the wages of labour. Their fond remembrances go back to the golden age when custom-house barriers rose at

every score of miles, when each petty State was enclosed as if within Chinese walls, and people were pressed to eat the fruits of the earth, for "what remained had to be given to swine." In those blessed days eggs were sold at Parma or Modena at 25c. the score, butter at 24c. the pound, and everything in proportion, and wine, as I have said, was so cheap that the lower classes at a fair drank at discretion "so much per hour."

Things are no doubt greatly changed within these last few years; what is called in Rome *Vino dei Castelli Romani*, common liquor from Albano, Marino, Genzano, Palestrina, &c., by no means bad in the opinion of most foreign residents, is sold at the rate of 70 c. to 80 c. the litre or quart. This is however the town and retail price. Outside the city walls, *i. e.*, free from the *Octroi* or consumption duty, the wholesale price would be at the rate of 50 c. or 60 c. per quart. But, besides this, there are qualities of native Roman wine, such as *Civita Lavinia*, cultivated by an Englishman, formerly an amateur, now a professional wine-grower, which fetches from two to three lire the bottle—about the same price as *Barolo*, *Chianti*, *Capri*, and the like choice wines from other parts of Italy, obtain in the Roman market. The highest price charged for any Italian wine at the Roman hotel tables is *Falernum* (four lire a bottle), a Campanian growth, which seems destined to attain the highest rank in modern as it had in ancient Italy.

It is calculated that Italy produces 30,000,000 hectolitres, a measure of 100 litres or quarts, of wine yearly, and could be made to yield 40,000,000. The home consumption is supposed to amount to about one such measure for each person, and that in a population of 25,000,000 would leave at least 5,000,000 hectolitres for exportation. If this quantity could be sold, not at 800 f. per hectolitre, which is the average price of Rhine wine, not at 500 f. as Bordeaux is sold, but only at 120 f., a revenue of 500,000,000 f. or 600,000,000 f. (20,000,000*l.* to 24,000,000*l.*) would accrue to the country. Instead of these sums the exportation of wine from Italy yielded in 1870 only 13,716,710 f.; against which must be set 2,749,900 f. for imported foreign wines, leaving only 11,065,810 f., as net profit in favour of Italy. By a glance at the Custom-house returns for the last ten years, with respect to this important branch of trade, it is however easy to perceive a considerable and constant rise in the exportation and a corresponding falling off in the importation, consequently an increasing balance in favour of Italy.

The importation of wine in casks, which in 1862 amounted to 348,000 hectolitres, and in 1864 rose to 570,000 hectolitres, had sunk to 99,000 hectolitres in 1872, while the exportation from 450,000 hectolitres in 1862, and 948,000 hectolitres in 1863, had risen to 1,195,000 hectolitres in 1872.

Within the same period the importation of bottled

wine showed only a rise from 627,000 bottles in 1862 to 953,000 bottles in 1872, while the exportation rose from 513,000 bottles in 1862 to 4,456,000 bottles in 1872.

Too great a reliance may perhaps not be placed on the correctness of these official figures, and too hasty conclusions should not be drawn from them. The impulse given to the wine trade in Italy, by the formation of Œnological Companies in every part of the country, may have been aided or hindered by good or bad vintages, and by the prevalence or abatement of the grape disease; but that a progress has been perceptible of late years, and especially since 1870, in the extension of this branch of agricultural industry, is a fact satisfactory for the present, and promising far more cheering results for the future.

The example of the English wine-grower at Civita Lavinia may be taken as sufficient evidence that Italian wine, the natural and pure juice of the grape, can with proper care in the making be sent abroad across land and sea, not only without running any risk of spoiling in the transmission, but even gaining in strength, spirit and flavour with every journey or voyage. The same may be said of Ricasoli's *Chianti*, of the *Barolo* of the Society in Asti, of *Lachryma Christi*, *Capri*, the Duc d'Aumale's *Zucco* and *Partinico*, and a few other Southern wines. These hold their own in foreign markets, and sell at prices by no means inferior to French

and other foreign wines. The adulteration to which wine-growers in less favoured climates are compelled to resort, in order to dispose of their produce, must needs turn to the advantage of a country where the wine, naturally good and generous, will be all the better the less it is interfered with, where all the care of the producer should be employed, not to enhance its spirit or flavour by adventitious mixture or compounds, but to bring out the juice in its greatest purity, trusting to nature to assert her ascendency over art. Still even the making of the most natural wine requires skill and attention; it is in so far an art, and an art unfortunately still almost in its infancy in Italy.

But in order that Italy may turn this branch of her produce to good purposes, it is necessary not only that she should learn how to make wine, but also that she should know how to sell it. The principal markets for Italian wines (besides France and Austria, where Italy still buys nearly as much as she sells) are the States of Central and South America, Tunis and Tripoli, Egypt, Turkey and Russia. The importation into the British Isles and the United States of North America, though considerably on the increase, is in a great measure hindered by the inability of the Italians to understand some of the most obvious requirements or "tricks" of the trade. Some of the French houses are careful to submit at first to heavy losses, by putting a cheap price on their wine to enable it

to make its way into the market, and when they have gained a footing, they raise the price by degrees and in the same measure as they "modify" the quality. The Italians have not as yet learnt the art of "thrusting in the thin end of the wedge." Their wine-merchants have been greedy, and when the first specimens of their ware have been received with favour, they have been in too great a hurry to at once adopt the French dodge of "more money for a worse article," thereby greatly damaging their own and their country's credit. Let them learn that "honesty is the best policy," and when their dealings are as fair as their wines ought to be clear and limpid (for the main fault of Italian wine is that it is too often thick and muddy, and your Anglo-Saxon would spurn even nectar, unless it were transparent as amber), they will come in for their share in the business in which France, Germany and Spain have so long outstripped them.

Great injury is also done to the Italian wine-trade by the clumsy and careless way in which wine, especially in bottles, is packed in its cases, and also by the enormous charges for freight made by the ship-owners, as well as by the heavy export duties levied at the custom-houses. Italian wine sent to Bombay, the prime cost of which was 2 f. 8 c. a bottle, rose, in consequence of duties and expenses, to 8 f. 76 c. by the time it reached its destination—so naturally lame and artificially clogged is still the wine and unfortunately all

other trade between that Italy which has the merchandise to sell, and the countries which have the money to buy it!

Much of what has been said with respect to wine will also apply to oil and silk. There is no reason why the whole south of Italy, the Roman and Neapolitan provinces and the islands, where the olive mantles large tracts of the hilly region, should not rival Tuscany in the quality as well as in the quantity of its oils; no reason why silk should not be as great a source of income south of the Apennines as it is in Lombardy, Piedmont, and Emilia. It is silk especially which, before the disease of the worms, enabled a proprietor of Milan or Bergamo to realize as much as 15 per cent. of the capital invested in land.

It required no less than the revolution which has given Italy a united existence to produce the phenomenon of which we have lately been witnesses—that of Lombard meat and butter sold in the London market. A succession of epidemic diseases, and the wasteful consumption occasioned by the short but sharp Franco-German war, rapidly thinned the herds upon which John Bull chiefly depended for the supply of his larder, and his purveyors ransacked the markets of neighbouring countries with a diligence which has depopulated the stalls and pastures of remote regions, and created a meat famine throughout Europe. Beef and veal, and even uneatable mutton, are sold now in Italy at twice and three

times the prices they were rated at ten years ago. A farmer of my acquaintance in Emilia, showing me a fair average yoke of oxen a few days ago, told me that their market value, which would have been thirty to thirty-five gold napoleons in 1871, would now be eighty to ninety napoleons; and a noble host of mine in Brianza, the lovely region rising from Monza to the Lake of Como, assured me that the increase in the price of cattle had attained formidable proportions throughout the Lombard provinces.

The Italians are not the same carnivorous animals as their English friends; the poor peasantry, even in the richest districts of the Northern plain, live almost exclusively on *polenta*, *minestra*, a little mixed bread and vegetables, from year's end to year's end, and it is only on great festivities that they allow themselves lard or bacon of their own curing, or a lean fowl of their own rearing. Butcher's meat, both in town and country, is reserved for "their betters," and even among these the consumption never amounts to one-third of what it is among the same classes in England. His cattle, however, is a matter of even greater importance to the Italian husbandman than his sirloin is to the English epicure. The whole labour of the country is here done by oxen. No horse is, or could with any good result be, put to the plough, and the whole carriage of agricultural produce is done by horned cattle—by fine strong steers in the plain, by poor half-starved cows in the mountains.

A man who has travelled far has still something to gratify his curiosity if he has never seen the cattle in Northern Italy, and especially in Emilia. You have before you at the market-places of Piacenza, Reggio, Parma and Bologna, yokes of oxen which have nearly the size, the gait and the strength of elephants. Short-horned, huge-boned, but withal sleek and stout, they evidently constitute the pride and love of their drivers, who, however dirty they may be themselves, never suffer a speck of dust to settle on the fair, pearly or straw-coloured hides of their darling cattle. No English squire's hunters are more thoroughly groomed, more comfortably fed and stalled, and I, whose mind is by no means bucolic, shall never forget the pleasure I received from the display of several scores of such animals at the Florence Exhibition of 1861. Where these splendid cattle are reared I cannot exactly say. I am aware that the cows with whose milk Parmesan cheese is made in the Lombard and Emilian provinces are periodically imported from Switzerland; and as every inch of the plain is too valuable, and every rood of ground in the mountains too barren, to supply available pasture ground, the whole cattle of Northern Italy is home-fed. Cattle-rearing districts of any extent are only to be found in the central and southern departments of the Peninsula, in the Tuscan Maremme, in the Roman Campagna, in the wilds of Puglia, Calabria and the islands. But the Southern herds, long-horned and wild as

buffaloes, have nothing in common with their civilized Lombard and Emilian brethren. These latter, I believe, are the result of careful tending and training in the stables, and their unmatched bulk, which makes them among all other oxen what the dray-horse is among the whole equine genus, is owing to the generous feeding supplied by irrigated meadows, by those *marcite* where the hay is cut four and even six times in the year.

Of these precious animals, it seems, the supply has never exceeded the demand. The sum total of the horned cattle in Italy is reckoned at 3,350,000, which, with a population of 25,000,000, gives an average of little more than a head of cattle for eight persons, and computing the productive soil, between wood, pasture and arable land, at 32,797,000 hectares, the average is only one-ninth of a head of cattle for every hectare, while in other agricultural countries, as France or Switzerland, Belgium or Holland, there are three or four heads of cattle for each inhabitant, and not less than one head of cattle for each hectare. I need not observe how idle such statistics and speculations are, not only if the comparison is made between Italy and for instance England, where every man eats beef and no oxen are put to the plough, but even between the various districts of Italy, as for instance between Milan and Rome, the one strictly agricultural, the other almost purely pastoral. Suffice it to say that Italy was eight or nine years ago completely free from distress or

anxiety about the number of her cattle. Meat sold at low prices and no plough lay idle for lack of a yoke, or of three and four yoke, of oxen, to draw it. The scarcity is of recent date; the disturbance between demand and supply has been caused by the general commercial activity of the European nations; and as the Italians have not given, but sold and very handsomely sold, their cattle, they must on the whole consider themselves gainers by the bargain. The hospitable nobleman of Brianza to whom I alluded above, though a liberal minded man, was "wondering whether labouring cattle should be considered fair merchandise, and not rather classed among mere agricultural implements actually in use, as spades, rakes and ploughs, the exportation of which should be forbidden as interfering with the husbandman's daily work." Doubtless the husbandman cannot till his field with the eighty or ninety gold pieces he has received in exchange for his handsome yoke of oxen. But both the price of his commodity and the wisdom of accepting an offer, however tempting, lie with him. It must all be left to free trade. It is for the peasant himself, or for the master whose duty it is to think and decide for him, to cast about how he may repair his loss without renouncing his gain; how with his eighty or ninety napoleons he may either buy or rear cattle to fill the place of the cattle he has parted with.

The remedy should be sought in a more brisk production of cattle. The supply should be made

to keep pace with the increasing demand. In return for their exported beeves Italy imports money. Let the incoming capital be turned to the purpose of promoting and stimulating the breeding of cattle, a result which will be naturally attained by the improvement of every branch of agricultural labour. Let the Italians extend the cultivation of forage on the hills; let them till large tracts of unproductive land in the plain; let them give more general attention to the proper accommodation of the cattle, to the rearing and crossing of their breeds, to their food and sanitary condition.

These exhortations cannot be addressed with equal justice to the people in the various districts of the Peninsula, for in the north there is not one inch of ground which is not carefully and more or less intelligently cultivated; there is not one branch of industry into which improvement on a large scale has not been more or less successfully introduced. Still the law of progress is incessant, and the resources of the soil are unlimited. In the opinion of many Italians now living, the cultivation of their lands as it was practised forty years ago "could not be bettered"; yet I, who remember what Piedmont, Lombardy and Emilia were in 1834, must avow that I scarcely recognize in what I see the state of things with which I was then familiar, and my friend of the Brianza to whom I have twice alluded, because his authority is beyond dispute, assured me that "notwithstanding the many drawbacks with

which heh as had lately to contend, on account of unfavourable seasons, his own and his neighbours' revenue from land has been enormously increasing from year to year."

There are indeed districts, and very large ones, where almost everything is to be done. In the Marches, in Umbria, and everywhere south of Tuscany, every branch of agriculture, and especially the rearing of cattle, admits of indefinite extension and amelioration. But with the downfall of the Papal and Bourbon Government, the activity of the age has reached the remotest regions. Already the establishment of public security and the development of rapid intercourse have been working wonders in the Roman and Neapolitan provinces. Property is speedily changing hands; the bees are everywhere driving the drones from the hives. The wild herds of the Roman Campagna, of the Tuscan Maremme, and of the wilds of the provinces of Salerno and Basilicata are tended with better results; while the breeding studs of horses stationed in the same districts, some of them under the immediate auspices of King Victor Emmanuel, have enabled the Minister of War to mount his cavalry with tolerable chargers, without too absolutely depending on foreign supply.

A little more of this good will and Italy will come in for her own share of the 3,000,000*l.* tribute paid by England to France, Belgium and Holland, for such mere luxuries as eggs, poultry and butter.

CHAPTER XVI.

ITALIAN PAUPERISM.

Italian Emigrants—Work and Work's Wages—Italian Want of Enterprise—Necessity the best Schoolmistress—The Blessings of Hunger—Italian Beggars—Causes of Mendicity—Alms-givers—Poverty and Emigration—Past and Present Italian Emigration—Statistics—Italians in South America—Italian Republicanism—Organ Boys.

SEVERAL hundred persons, chiefly able-bodied young men, embarked at Naples in November, bound to Montevideo. Ships laden with equally precious cargoes followed from Genoa during the winter. A small but somewhat constant stream of emigration, chiefly to the South American regions of the Plate, has set in for some time from various parts of Italy, and lately even from those districts of the Two Sicilies, the population of which has been hitherto so sedentary, that many people there looked upon transportation as a more efficient means of striking terror among brigands and other criminals than even capital punishment.

There is nothing alarming in the movement so far as it goes. The maximum per centage of emigrants, about 13·55 of the whole number, is supplied by Genoa

and the Riviera, while the minimum per cent. 3·15, is the contribution of all the provinces of the Southern kingdom. Such as it is, nevertheless the exodus has raised considerable alarm. Something very new and hardly conceivable, it is said, must have come upon Neapolitans and Sicilians to send them forth in quest of such distant homes, and the causes, it is added, must be sought in the general distress of the country, in the heavy taxation and in the severity of the new system of military duty. Those easy-going, indolent Southerners have been roused from their habitual apathy by what was meant as a tender of rights and liberties, but which has actually turned out an infliction of burdens and responsibilities. They have been made self-conscious beings; they claim the power to think, to choose, to act for themselves. They balance the good and evil of their condition; and, aware of the existence of other regions where it may be possible to better it, they shake off the inertia which so long rooted them to the soil, and give in to the seductions of the competence, the security and the true republican liberty, which, in their conceit, await them beyond seas.

There may be something in all these arguments; but those who take their ground upon them err perhaps in their inference, that the evil they complain of should be taken as evidence of the unfavourable working of the new political system; or, in other words, that freedom has rather lessened than increased the general well-being of the Italian

people. Alarm and misgiving are always rife in Italy, as in most countries, on the approach of winter. Distress is staring the people and Government in the face; prices are high, and a further rise is apprehended; wages bear no proportion to the workman's wants; help is needed for a large part of the population, and it must be procured with utter disregard of those sound golden rules of political economy to which most Italian politicians are wedded. The people require bread; they must be supplied with employment, and for five or six months the country must in some measure be transformed into a national workshop.

Were there money enough, and could one feel sure of its being applied with thrift and intelligence, famine itself, like many other evils, might eventually be accounted a blessing. There is an enormous amount not only of useful, but of absolutely necessary work to be done in Italy, and sheer want might furnish the stimulus to rouse the people and their rulers from the sluggishness which has suffered many of their districts to fall far into the rear of modern European civilization. There are national, provincial and municipal roads to be constructed; the drainage of large and small towns to be attended to; great centres of life like Florence and Naples to be supplied with wholesome and plentiful water; extensive quarters in most cities, and especially in the capital, to be thrown open to air and light.

Most undoubtedly Italy is in no need of emi-

gration. Were her people 75,000,000 instead of 25,000,000, and were they all to strain their energies to the utmost, they would scarcely be sufficient to rescue their country from the wreck and ruin into which the neglect of centuries has plunged it. There is hardly a stream that should not be made to give back the good, fertile lands which it has laid waste; hardly a swamp that should not be restored to its former condition of a garden; hardly a mountain side that should not again be mantled over with the fresh, luxuriant verdure of which blind improvidence or sheer wanton destructiveness has stripped it. To say that Italy is not half, not one-fourth as rich as nature would make her may seem a paradox; yet there is no doubt that the Neapolitan provinces, Sicily and Sardinia, could be made, to say the least, as productive as the North, where nevertheless, whatever the natives may think, there is still so much room for improvement. For anything that may compel them to work, the Italians ought at all times to be truly thankful. It is not that the lower classes are by any means deficient in strength or good will. Nowhere, perhaps, could steadier or soberer or more intelligent operatives be found. It is not the rank and file that are at fault. The blame rests with their employers, with the people of the middle and higher classes, among whom the spirit of association and enterprise has hitherto made little progress. For all undertakings of a profitable nature men are apt to look up to the

Government, or at the utmost they limit their exertions to a participation in the deliberations of their municipal councils. Funds contributed by townships or parishes are reckoned in Italy as "private subscriptions"; and it is a constant fact that the corporations of the Italian communes are apt to be rather munificent than provident administrators. They seldom grudge anything that may be deemed conducive to the lustre of their petty localities, but often show niggardliness where the real welfare of the people is at stake. There is hardly a village in Italy which has not during these last ten years set up its grand public monument to its *valoroso concittadino*, hardly an obscure corner which has not its anniversary, centenary or millenary to celebrate. For any showy ceremony, for a theatre or a circus, a parasitic college or a barren academy, municipal money is easily forthcoming; but the treasures thus lavished, the liabilities thus incurred, drain the public resources and leave little, if anything, for profitable enterprise or enlightened charity.

All this was foreseen and foretold. These are the trying circumstances under which the Italian kingdom came into existence. The clerical enemies of the country may well see nothing in them but the signs of heavenly displeasure; but wiser people will look upon them as a dispensation intended to stimulate latent and dormant energies, and to make up by hard work the too short and

easy contest by which the nation passed from the misery of enslavement to the enjoyment of independence. It is well that the Italians, who fought little, should have to work much for their country.

It will not do in their case to rely exclusively on the results of popular education. It is at first stern necessity that can best counteract indolent habits and improvident propensities. The Italians have good reasons to be thankful to the cholera, the almost yearly visits of which make them at least temporarily aware of the necessity of looking to their drains. Their providence in that respect is as yet very far from exceeding the immediate exigencies of the occasion, and their activity is apt to relax the moment the pressure of necessity is removed. It is not too much to hope that education will in the end accomplish the cruel, yet beneficent, mission which pestilence in the summer and famine in the winter have initiated.

There is unfortunately hardly any want pressing with sufficient weight on these Southern people; no pinching cold, none of the depressing gloom and dampness of higher latitudes. To any man accustomed to a bracing Northern life the Italians must suggest the idea of a half-starved population. There is little midway in the country between lank leanness and morbid obesity. The delusion that a good substantial diet, chiefly consisting of animal food, is unsuited to these mild Mediterranean climates

ought to be obvious at least to those whose daily table emphatically belies their specious theory. In Italy he who works hardest often fares most wretchedly. People see a country labourer in Calabria or Sicily contrive to live and toil upon prickly pears and roots, and do not consider that if he thrives it is in spite of it, not because of it. But the truth is, he does not thrive; his swollen figure and bilious complexion bear witness to his unwholesome constitution. The race is strong and hardy; they live through all privation, but the *moral* suffers from it even if the *physique* is not affected. The very indifference to his comforts deprives a man of spirit and enterprise. Denied the fair wages of labour he learns to make idleness the *summum bonum*. Your *lazzarone* avenges himself on the society which stints him by denying it the aid of his strong arm. He can dispense with the rich man's money and likes to see how the rich man will shift without him. A real benefactor to Italy would be he who could contrive to make the lowest classes feel want; who could awaken in them the wholesome sensation of hunger, and point out the only means by which its pangs are honestly assuaged.

Unfortunately in Italy, the very beggars are not hungry. All the social and religious, and many of the political, institutions of the country have had, and still have, the effect of encouraging mendicity. Mendicancy is an old Italian institution, and it will die hard if it ever dies at all. It is the resource in

which the rulers of the country sought a substitute for those provident measures by which well-regulated communities deal with the great evil of pauperism. So far as the laws voted by the national Parliament, as well as by provincial and municipal boards, could afford any remedy, beggary ought already to have disappeared from the country. "*L'accattonaggio*," we are told, "is strictly forbidden throughout the Peninsula." Practically however the country is still swarming with mendicants, and the priests have even the assurance to assert that "the poor are more numerous now than they were in the happy times when the dole at the convent-doors more than amply provided for their wants." Men less audacious and unscrupulous as to the truth of such statements aver that, great as the evil of all this mendicant multitude is, it must for the present be endured, as the provisions by which the still half-organized young kingdom of Italy is attempting to deal with pauperism are not adequate to the extent of the misery arising from the famine prices now current. In other words, the people must be allowed to beg because just now the State or the parish cannot feed them.

The confession would be humiliating even if it were honest. But that it is not strictly consistent with truth, I might argue by referring to all I have said with respect to the sums allowed both by the Government and by the city corporations for the endowment of theatres, for the Carnival, and other

public enjoyments. What might be used to support and improve the people is squandered in luxuries which tend to corrupt them. But apart from such considerations, it should be borne in mind that mendicity is by no means the representative of the pauperism of the country, as it is not in any manner the cure for it. The beggars we meet in the streets are not the real sufferers, and by relieving them we do not lessen the people's misery, but add to it. A very little exercise of good will on the part of the authorities a few years ago would have fully succeeded in clearing Milan, Turin, and even Bologna and Florence, of the vagrant rabble which under former Governments infested their streets. The new broom of a Roman Municipality has swept tolerably clean even the main thoroughfares of the capital, and with such effect that it is still possible to walk from Piazza del Popolo to Piazza di Venezia without being accosted by a single mendicant. Unfortunately mendicants cannot be driven from their strongholds of the churches, where the priests plead the privilege of the sanctuary. The rabble which lurks at the doors of the sacred edifices, which sallies forth with impunity and takes the people by storm when either some religious festivity or some Carnival frolic puts every one in good humour, the hideous, loathsome, impudent rabble which haunts the Piazza di Spagna and the approaches to the Pincio, scraping coppers by sheer importunity —are not so badly off. They are old in the trade,

a trade hardly at all affected by the distress which is urged as a pretext on their behalf. A workhouse of very moderate proportions would easily accommodate all of them who are really entitled to public support. The rest should be simply dealt with as vagrants. It is the long indulgence, nay, the encouragement, that vagrancy under the disguise of poverty has always met with on the part of the authorities in olden times, and of the clergy at all times, that has bred mendicity in the people's bone and made them take to begging by instinct as ducks take to swimming. Not only does he who can hope to live by alms refuse to do a stroke of work, but many who do work and live hard by the sweat of their brow will turn out as amateur beggars as if for a lark; and nothing is more common than to meet on a Sunday a well-dressed woman or "shabby genteel" man, or more often a decent lad or girl, evidently well-to-do persons in their rank of life, who will look at you, and after some hesitation and with half a smile hold out a hand and just *try it on*, thinking there can be no harm in trying and enjoying the fun whether it brings a windfall or not.

Little will be done towards correcting one class of the people of the trick of asking unless at the same time another class can be cured of the habit of giving. I have heard a foreign diplomatist declare that he never leaves home without a pocketful of coppers, and that he makes it a point to part

with them to as many as apply for them; and I have seen an old lady who did not even wait for an application, but thrust her bounty into the hand of the passers-by unsolicited, whenever she fancied them "objects" entitled to it. "It is all charity," these good Samaritans say, "and it can never do harm." And certainly it does none to the donors; but the mischief it does to an unworthy receiver, to all his class and to society, is evidently not considered by them.

Nay, there are even philanthropists who stand on the right of the thing; they contend that every man should be free to do as he likes with his own, and that no one should be compelled to work so long as another's "spontaneous" kindness will procure him exemption from it, forgetting how little that is spontaneous imposture and importunity allow in this matter. It is probably upon this principle that the Belgian Government, under clerical influence, came to the determination of removing every restriction from their mendicants, establishing beggary as a branch of Free Trade. But in Italy the experiment has long since been made, and the result has been to sow a seed that it will task all the energies of a provident ruler to root up.

The priests, always implacable in their enmity to political economy, point to emigration as a consequence of the hindrance raised by the Government to private charity. "So long as there were

convents," they say, "no one had need to leave the country." And they groan over the announcement that about 30,000 persons have migrated from Genoa and other sea-ports during the year 1873. But the emigrants were certainly not beggars; they did not belong to those classes who have been pauperized by indiscriminate alms as much as by any other demoralizing cause. Those that went were men who had something to win or lose, but who aspired to better fortunes or to greater freedom than they fancied they could obtain in their own country. Emigration is nothing new in Italy. The country in olden times was remarkable for its colonizing powers; and so long as the Mediterranean was the centre of the globe, Italy reigned commercially all along its shores, and established those factories in Asia Minor, in Egypt and North Africa, which are even now rising to new importance. The whole of Italy is not fertile, at least not all equally fertile, and the inhabitants of the mountainous districts have at all times either periodically come down to the plain to drain and till Roman, Tuscan and Corsican marshes, or wandered abroad; some of them as clever and thrifty artisans, some as little better than vagrants, itinerant musicians, vendors of plaster casts, &c.

In all these wanderings of the Italian race some peculiarities of character have been invariably observed. The Italians had since the Middle Ages no settlement of their own to go to; hence their

emigration was never gregarious, seldom very venturous, permanent or final. They sallied forth at random, felt their way as they went, indifferent what spot chance took them to, so long as they earned their daily bread and saved money enough to go back and settle in comparative wealth in their old homes. The love of adventure and the spirit of enterprise which distinguished the contemporaries of Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus were discountenanced by centuries of improvident and craven misrule. The ideas of the Italians were cramped; the whole race was dwarfed, and became torpid. Travelling was at an end; the great colonies planted by the Dutch or English beyond the ocean were to their contracted imagination not only unknown, but unreal regions, and navigation in remote seas appeared not merely laborious and perilous, but actually fabulous.

The emancipation and unification of the country could not fail to create a new spirit among the people. They began to feel their importance at home and abroad. Where, a few years ago, there were petty bodies of Sardinian, Sicilian, Tuscan, Roman and Austro-Venetian settlers, as in Pera or Galata, in Tunis or Algiers, in Egypt or Uruguay, there are now considerable Italian colonies. Enterprise in every branch of industry is, if not powerfully encouraged, at least allowed the freest scope by the well-meaning Government. The Italian has a flag, representing a nation strong enough to watch

over his interests and vindicate his rights wherever he goes. There is nothing to prevent his feeling at home in any quarter of the globe. Nay, the recollection of the debt mankind owes to his race for its ancient civilizing influences, the tale of the long sufferings by which that race has been rehabilitated, and by which it has placed itself in a position to resume its former mission, has won for the Italian the sympathy of foreign nations, and ensures him a welcome even among people to whom his name till lately conveyed hardly any meaning, and to whom his flag was as yet unfamiliar.

According to official accounts, there were, in 1870, 447,000 Italians living abroad, of whom 213,000 in Europe, 44,000 in Africa, and 170,000 in America; the rest in Asia and Australia. These however are merely persons who consider themselves Italian subjects, and who obeyed the summons to give in their names at the various Legations or Consulates abroad. Many of the men still attached to the fallen Governments, and indifferent to the advantages accruing to them from their right as citizens of the new State, may have disregarded the decree which claimed their allegiance; and there are in various parts of the Mediterranean, especially in the Levant, whole families of unquestionable Italian descent, who have lived abroad from generation to generation for centuries, and who intermarry and keep up continuous intercourse with their old home, yet who, during the long period

of Italy's enslavement, deemed it expedient either to become subjects of the State where their lot was cast or even to obtain naturalization in distant countries with which they had no connexion, so as to ensure a more valid protection than their feeble native Government could afford. On the most liberal computation, however, it would not be easy to rate the Italian race now existing in every part of the world out of Italy at more than 1,000,000.

The ebbing tide, the symptoms of which are again perceptible in Italy, is not at this moment setting towards its former quarter in the Levant. It so happens that those pioneers of Italian emigration whom political persecution drove from the country in the early part of the century, Garibaldi, Fanti, Cialdini, Cucchiari and many others, had the good fortune to fill the world with the report of their exploits, and exercised in foreign countries, and especially among the inferior races of Spain and Spanish America, an ascendency which paved the way for the success of those who were to come after them. They are one-eyed men in the land of the blind. Uruguay and Buenos Ayres are almost Italian colonies. The trade and industry and, in a great measure, the politics of those States are monopolized by old Italian settlers, and the new arrivals are welcomed by men who address them in their own language, and whose habits, views, interests and aspirations are identical with their own.

Independently of actual suffering, therefore, mere

curiosity and love of change, sanguine hopes and restless ambition, may contribute to determine the exodus of these as yet inconsiderable bands of Italian emigrants. It is not so much pinching poverty at home as the prospect of boundless wealth abroad which urges them to the venture, and there may be mixed up with mere pecuniary considerations other motives based on crude notions of democracy, the expectation that a millennium of political and social equality, of unlimited liberty and peaceful fraternity, is still to be their lot for the rest of their lives. Republicanism is now utterly impotent for good or evil in Italy itself; but a vague idolatry of the mere name, a fanatic longing for the bare form of that kind of government, still lurks in the mind of those who least understand its meaning or have any experience of its working. They have, as they are not unwilling to confess, a tolerably free Monarchy in their own country; but a "Republic" smiles upon them from beyond the Atlantic; and it is Garibaldi's own Republic—a State where no one either commands or obeys; where military service is imposed on no man, but every man is free to cut every other man's throat; where there is no Pope-King, but where every priest, monk or Jesuit is king.

Little call as there may be for emigration from Italy, it is perhaps as well that men of this stamp should look abroad for the realization of their day-dreams. They are "true patriots who leave their

country for their country's good." Emigration well directed can be morally and materially advantageous to those who go and those who are left behind. It seems impossible to look upon those ship-loads of men leaving Genoa or Naples otherwise than as a symptom of that new intellectual and physical activity which the elevation of the country to higher destinies could not fail to develope.

There is only one class of emigrants with whose exit the Italian Government have at last determined to interfere, and this is the large body of juvenile beggars who infest all the countries of Europe and America in the capacity of organ-grinders, plaster-cast sellers, &c. The Bill which, after long elaboration in both Houses of the Italian Legislature since 1868, has this year become law will certainly go as far towards curing a grievous evil as the unaided action of the Italian Government can reach. But it seems the legislators are not disappointed in the hopes they entertained that the humanity as well as the self-interest of foreign nations would prompt them to lend their aid in the suppression of a scandal and a nuisance of which all had equal reason to complain—that trade in white slaves, "*Tratta dei Bianchi*" as the Italians called it, by which little boys, and more lately little girls, by thousands were sent forth to exercise vagrant callings, "*professioni girovaghe*,"—more properly to beg, thieve, or do worse, with utter ruin to them-

selves, soul and body, and disgrace to their country's name.

It is to be hoped that the authorities in Italy itself will be firm, and see to the strict observance of a law in every respect creditable to its framers, lest it should be said that its aim was merely to monopolize home-bred beggary, and check in that respect the migratory tendencies of the needy part of the population. Should these wandering beggars, as it is proposed, upon being rescued from the tyranny of the brutes who claim their services on the terms of a specious form of apprenticeship, be so taken care of as to be made honest and useful members of society, perhaps a similar rehabilitation could easily be extended to the children of those professional beggars, who, having themselves grown old in the trade, see no other opening for their offspring, and train them in the school in which they were themselves brought up. The evil will have to be cut at the root. There are classes of men in Italy whom nothing but force can ever wean from the charms of a vagrant life. If the discipline is not applicable to the adult race, then at least let the rising generation be withdrawn from their evil influence.

CHAPTER XVII.

CHURCH AND STATE IN ITALY.

Monks and Beggars—Monastic Orders—Mendicant Orders—Monastic Vows—Collision between the Law and the Clerical Authorities—The Marriage Laws—Education—Anarchy of Religious Opinions—The Diocese of Mantua—Apathy of the Government and of the Intellectual Classes on Religious Subjects.

A SINGULAR phenomenon attracted my attention in Rome as I was leaving my hotel on the first morning after my arrival. There stood at the door a young, burly and sturdy Franciscan friar shaking a tin box, which seemed to contain a few copper coins, and appealing to the charity of all who went in or out of the hotel. Outside the hotel, and a few steps across the little square in front of it, there stood a municipal guard, or policeman, looking on unconcerned, with his left hand on the hilt of his sword and the right twirling his moustache, but now and then making a dash at some of the young *ciociari* who infest Via Condotti with the insistence and importunity of gad-flies, and telling them in a voice of thunder that "Mendicancy was forbidden throughout the dominions of King Victor Emmanuel." Here is a striking instance of equality before the

law, I reflected; but I remembered that the Bill on Religious Corporations in Rome was then under discussion, and I hoped matters would proceed differently where that Bill was already law.

But I went up to Fiesole subsequently, and I was in Tuscany, where the Piedmontese Convent Laws had been in force since 1860, and I found monks everywhere in the enjoyment of the same begging monopoly which had so unpleasantly shocked me in Rome. Like all other travellers, I visited the curiosities of the old Etruscan city on the hill, the cyclopean walls, the amphitheatre, the temple, and last, not least, the Capuchin convent, with its panoramic view of unrivalled magnificence, where, since last year, a fine marble seat has been erected by "an Englishman," as one learns from the inscription, "for the accommodation of his brother travellers of all countries."

There were thirty monks in the church chanting their evening psalms; a lay brother gave me admittance into the garden, where two common labourers were at work,—for Francis no longer condescends to handle his spade,—and hence I was allowed to stroll into the fine cypress grove, which mantles several acres of ground on the hill-side. "What are these monks doing here?" I asked. "Do they not belong to the suppressed religious corporations? Has not their property been taken from them and pensions allowed them as compensation?"

The laws relating to the abolition of monastic

orders in Italy have been promulgated at so many distinct epochs and under so great a variety of influences,—they have been drawn up with such studied carelessness, and in such deliberately obscure and ambiguous language,—that it is the hardest thing in the world to make out the real mind of the legislator, or to carry his behests into execution. It is certainly next to impossible to know what, in the matter of convents, the law allows or forbids.

The original object was to do away with religious orders, yet to deal tenderly with their inmates. The religious community as such, it was understood, had ceased to be; its members had lost all right to their property, but they were to be provided with pensions and even allowed, if they wished it, to club together the means supplied to them, continuing to live in common, observing the rules of their institution, and even, where it was possible, residing in their former premises, or in other kindred establishments at their own choice. They were however forbidden to add to the numbers existing at the time of the promulgation of the law, and it was thus foreseen that the vast monastic host, which amounted to a positive nuisance in Italy, would rapidly dwindle to reasonable proportions, and in the course of, at the utmost, two generations disappear altogether.

More lately a new spirit came over the dream of Italian legislators. They professed to take their stand on the principle of a "Free Church in a Free

State," because they flattered themselves that on that ground they could best grapple with the Papal question, and they declared that there should be, in religious as in other matters, full liberty for all. This generous and seemingly wise and just resolution was soon put to the test, and people heard with dismay in Rome, in October last, that a young lady of good family had taken the veil in a convent of Lauretane, or Sisters of the Order of Our Lady of Loreto.

Clearly one nun more or less cannot greatly affect the general economy of Italian social life. But it should be borne in mind that the great old army of monks and nuns was also recruited singly and separately, yet it contrived to muster tens of thousands in its formidable ranks. Religious routine and ascetic contemplation have peculiar charms for a Southern people, whose lazy indolent propensities they flatter and hallow, and it is impossible to say to what extent these instincts will be indulged if the line is not drawn somewhere, and if the principle of absolute freedom is admitted.

It is urged that religious associations are no longer recognized as corporate bodies (*Enti Morali*), that monks will no longer possess anything in common, and that the Statutes of Mortmain will prevent the accumulation especially of real estate in their hands. But the experience of all countries shows how easily such enactments are virtually set aside, and in Italy at Fiesole, Lucca, Pescia,

and elsewhere, Capuchins who have been driven from their convents, whose lands and houses have been confiscated and sold by auction, are now already, a few years after their suppression and dispersion, again living together in their cloisters, again in possession of their lands and premises, which "pious benefactors" have bought and given back to them under trust. They are thus in the enjoyment both of their property and of the pensions they were allowed as indemnity for the loss of it.

Italian devotees have an especial tenderness for the mendicant fraternities. Dominicans, Jesuits and Benedictines were either originally foreign institutions or were greatly modified by foreign influence; but your merry, greasy, grovelling Franciscan is an Italian creation, and continues to be what he has long been, the idol of the ignorant multitude. The Capuchins are mendicants by the nature of their vow. They are forbidden to hold property or even to touch gold and silver. Their livelihood ostensibly depends on the charity of the faithful, and their lay brethren go about, either with their wallets or with their donkeys, levying tithes upon the people, chiefly of the poorest classes, coming round regularly at harvest and vintage time, begging for oil, wine, walnuts and chestnuts, and stimulating the munificence of the naturally beggarly peasantry by tales of miracles and the gift of halfpenny images, recommended as talismans or amulets.

Your Zoccolante, or sandal-wearing Franciscan, is the Zany of the Roman Catholic Church. Manzoni, who in his novel chose Fra Cristoforo, a Capuchin, for his hero, painted also Fra Galdino, another Capuchin, with infinite drollery, a type of the cowled beggar, common in the author's own days as in the remote period to which the story refers. In Fiesole at the present moment and in other minor towns of Tuscany, the begging friar drives as profitable a trade as he ever did, or indeed a better, because he can now plead his real or pretended distress; he declares that he has been robbed of his property, that his pension is inadequate to his wants, or, in other words, that "he is starving," attributing to superhuman intervention the rubicund face and rotund figure which in the midst of all this misery he still contrives to exhibit. The vineyards and olive-groves of Fiesole, the fields of the valley of the Mugnore, are taxed by him without stint. Long habit and gossiping instincts make the monk's call an event in the lonely cottage; and as he is as a rule an ignorant, underbred, and not very moral man, his prying curiosity, meddling fussiness and coarse irreverent jocularity, render his intercourse with the people rather amusing than edifying, and on the whole far more dangerous and mischievous than the influence of those more sleek and civilized orders against whom so loud a mad-dog cry is now being raised. In Rome itself, where the "Black Pope,"

as the General of the Jesuits is called, had to give way before implacable popular animosity, the begging friars have evidently regained their former confidence, and as many lusty and impudent Franciscans, Carmelites and other brethren are now daily to be met prowling about with their wallets and never-failing baggy green cotton umbrellas, as ever were seen in the palmy days when the Pope was king.

There is a terrible haziness in Italian minds respecting every subject connected with religious questions. They have avowed that they will stand or fall by liberty, and pride themselves on being true to their liberal faith. Why should they quarrel with a man or woman's "spontaneous calling" for a monastic existence? But the question is to what extent this vocation may be called spontaneous, even in spite of all the precautions adopted by the law, prescribing the age at which a novice is allowed to bind himself or herself to irrevocable vows, and declaring such vows to be null and void whenever the professed monk or nun wishes to be free from them. The liberty to seek refuge from the world's storms in a monastic haven is one thing, the liberty to coax or bully a weak-headed young man or woman into a claustral gaol is another. All that tissue of fraud and force by which a daughter is by unnatural parents immured in a convent against her will, and which fills our mind with tragic horror as we read Manzoni's

masterly episode of the 'Monaca di Monza,' is as true now as it ever was in the gloomiest period of the seventeenth century. There may be, and there often actually is, moral if not physical coercion in what is called "spontaneous vocation," and nothing short of the most radical and general change in the whole system of education can establish the relations between children and their parents or guardians on what may be considered a footing of equal liberty. But as actual interference in these domestic concerns in a great measure is beyond the scope and power of the law, it becomes very questionable whether the admission of novices into monasteries and nunneries and their permanent residence there, both before and after they have taken the vows, should not be made amenable to Government regulations grounded on other principles than those of a Free Church in a Free State.

It is in the opinion of many Italians a humiliating fact that, under present circumstances, and with the immense advantages that her long ascendency and her compact organization give to the Church, it is impossible for the State to meet her on equal terms. A Free Church in a Free State, they argue, might be a plausible scheme of policy if the parties could start fair, and if both had from the outset the same hold on the popular mind. But here the Church is already in possession, and, unless the Italians are satisfied with her influence, they must counteract it by gentle, legal and moral

means, if these be found efficient; but if they do not answer the purpose, by any other contrivance consistent with justice and morality by which the goal may be reached. It is from this point of view that religious questions begin now to be reconsidered in Italy, and it would not be surprising if Bismarck's "iron and blood" practice were before long to appear of greater weight in their estimation than Cavour's "Free Church in a Free State" theory.

One of the first stumbling-blocks with which this plausible theory came into collision was the Civil Marriage Law. By a first attempt at legislation on that subject the civil contract alone was made obligatory; the sacrament was declared to be optional; but the marriage before the priest is no marriage in its civil effects; the union is not binding, and the children born from it are not legitimate till the formalities before the syndic or mayor, or his representative, have been duly complied with, or, in other words, till the marriage has been properly registered. The object was merely to render the citizen independent of the priest in his matrimonial arrangement. The marriages of runaway monks or nuns or priests who had repented their vows, those between Catholics and Jews or Protestants—never sanctioned by the Church without great reluctance and upon a heavy charge—could by the existing law be celebrated, not only without the consent or knowledge of the eccle-

siastical authority, but in open defiance to it. The law seemed, theoretically, both just and provident. But the priests called out against the "sacrilege"; they denounced a purely civil marriage as "concubinage," and they were strong enough to persuade many thousands to break the law and base their union on the religious ceremony alone. They complained that the civil authority claimed the monopoly of marriage, and that at least the Church should be on an equal footing with the State, and either the civil or the religious marriage should be equally valid.

The argument however was false. What had been done by the original Act was conceived in the interest of freedom, but something remained to be done in the interest of order. The exclusive right of celebrating marriages had been taken from the priest because he exercised it upon principles destructive of the equal liberties of the subject, because he objected to some marriages on grounds at variance with the civil law. But he had still the power of celebrating marriages which the civil law considered illegal. This might be matter of indifference to the contracting parties; but it was not so to their offspring, who would thereby be bastardized at their birth. The offence these parties commit is prejudicial to the interest of persons who are no party to the contract, and are not consulted about it. It was in order to guarantee these latter that a new Bill was brought into Parliament, decreeing

not only that a marriage contracted before a priest shall be null and void unless it has the sanction of the civil authority, but also that a marriage so contracted shall be considered a punishable offence, the penalty being a fine for the contracting parties, and both fine and imprisonment for the celebrating priest.

This measure has been stigmatized by some Liberals as inconsistent with those principles of religious freedom which should now preside over the Council of Italian legislators; but we must reflect that the number of illegal marriages since the promulgation of the law now in vigour—that is, within seven years—has been exceedingly large (18,000 in the province of Bologna alone), and that the cases in which the practice was used as a fraud to entrap bigoted women into a union which was afterwards broken with perfect impunity on the ground of its illegality, have been by no means unfrequent. Something more stringent, more absolute, and, if need be, tyrannical, to counteract the baleful influence of the priesthood must be resorted to. This is one of the points on which the State must be armed against the Church.

The new Marriage Bill was put on the shelf during the Session out of consideration for an exalted personage, whose clandestine and illegal union with a person of low rank might, by a retroactive clause in the Bill, receive such sanction as would confer upon that person the queenly title;

but, however some modification obviating this inconvenience may be advisable, the measure is a matter of necessity, and can scarcely fail to be re-presented and adopted.

Far more difficult it is for the State to proceed hand in hand with the Church in matters relating to popular education.

Father Ceresa, the Principal of the most flourishing Barnabite College in Lombardy, was convicted of "corrupting the morals of the youths committed to his care," and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. The father was a man between fifty and sixty years old, of considerable learning and hitherto unblemished character, the pride of the Barnabite Order, and so highly valued as an instructor that his College was frequented by the scions of the noblest and wealthiest families of Milan and other cities.

Of his guilt no unprejudiced person could entertain the slightest doubt; the tribunal had dealt only too leniently with the brute, and offences of the same nature as were laid to his charge equally led to the suppression of a school kept by the Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes or Ignorantins at Civita Vecchia, and of similar priestly establishments in other localities. Father Ceresa however had very strong defenders among the public. These looked upon him and upon the other "black sheep" in the clerical flock as much abused, slandered and persecuted men. Faith in the advan-

tages of priestly instruction is very strong in some parents' hearts; and most of the children driven from the Milan Barnabite College in consequence of Cerosa's catastrophe have been distributed among other Barnabite Colleges throughout the province, the parents evidently choosing to run any risk of new scandals rather than avail themselves of the gymnasiums and lyceums opened by the State for their benefit.

There is no subject about which the emancipated Italians have shown a more laudable zeal than the instruction of the people, and, in imitation of some of their neighbours, they have been working at Bill after Bill with a view to solve some of the most complicate questions connected with it. They wished that the education given to the 25,000,000 Italians should be "gratuitous, compulsory and secular," but, at the same time, "free." As the State is neutral in all religious matters, or, as the Pope's friends say, "godless," its schools are so far "atheistical" that no provision is made in them for religious education. In a struggle between the priest and the schoolmaster it was thought that the issue could not be doubtful, that darkness could not prevail against light. Every boy and girl in Italy was to receive instruction. The State provided schools for the purpose, but any child could also be educated at home or in any private—consequently also in any priestly—establishment, subject only to Government supervision, and provided

evidence be given of the sufficiency of the instruction.

This, again, seemed fair and reasonable, and it was as correct an application of the principle which was to determine the relations between Church and State as could be suggested. But in the first place the priests strongly objected to lay inspection, and resisted or evaded it. In the second place, admitting even that by the most strenuous exertions the State could afford the best and cheapest possible school, it could never compete with the Church, relying as she does on her old strong and compact organization, on an army of teachers placed above want by endowments, revelling in the ease of their claustral life, and free from those domestic ties and burdens which weigh on the ill-paid and generally ill-appreciated lay schoolmaster. But apart from these economical considerations, the State has to contend against that moral power of the Church to which the too hasty declarations of indiscreet liberalism have given fresh strength. The State supplies no religious instruction, leaving parents to deal with children in that respect according to their own convictions; but in the opinion of many parents instruction apart from religion is necessarily immoral; it is at least incomplete, and since they must go to the priest for their children's catechism, they think it as well to go to him for the whole course of their children's studies, so that their training may be harmonious and consistent, and free from those new-

fangled doctrines which sap the foundations of their faith. The consequence of this is that at Milan, as I have said, the Barnabites have still nearly the whole of the youth of the town under their control, and in Florence the principal of an admirably conducted lyceum told me that "the pupils in his institution barely represented a very small fraction of the rising generation now at school, all the rest frequenting priestly, and usually monastic, establishments."

There is nothing more appalling than the anarchy and division prevailing in Italy on religious subjects.

It would seem that no people ought to be more deeply concerned in the issue of the great quarrel between Cæsarism and Ultramontanism than the Italians, yet Italy is almost the only country in the world in which the "Old Catholic" movement has not excited the least attention. Such a part as the Italians could be expected to bear in that question has already, as they think, been played out. They have wounded the Papacy in its most vital point; they have overthrown the Temporal Power, and thereby not only achieved the triumph of their national cause, but also placed religion on the only basis on which it can stand—that of the spontaneous submission of the laity to the clergy. Further than that the Italians will perhaps never be made to venture. They will, as they say, not only have no religious squabbles, but even no religious differences among themselves, no heresy, no schism.

They aspire to a religious liberty which is, in their opinion, perfectly compatible with religious unity. There may be in their country unlimited dissent, but it must be individual; as many persuasions as there are heads, but no distinct confessions or denominations—no Babel of Churches or sects. It must be quite possible, as it has always been, even under the most uncompromising Papal tyranny, for husband and wife, for brother and sister, to live together in love and unity under the same roof, the male members of the "happy family" being or fancying themselves thorough atheists or materialists, but allowing that religion is good for the other sex; reversing the old Mahometan notion, and apparently thinking that "only women have souls to save." Things in their country, the Italians say, have always been so. The great contest in the Middle Ages between the Empire and the Papacy, which broke out on ecclesiastical grounds in Germany, assumed exclusively political colours when the Guelphs and Ghibellines of Lombardy and Tuscany meddled with it. The Schism of the fifteenth century, the Reformation of the sixteenth, equally disturbed the social order in Italy without affecting her religious belief. What the Italians did in the days of Luther and Calvin, they do now in those of Döllinger and Loyson—they receive the news of religious innovation with curiosity, but dismiss it with a sneer. "One Person or three in the Trinity, what matters? We have not got to feed them." This bold pleasantry

of the Venetian patrician, which I have already quoted, speaks volumes. The Italian will carry superstition to any extent; but there is no bigotry in his composition. It was only against the Dominican inquisitors in Milan and Naples that the populace frequently rose in open rebellion; and it is only against their Jesuit teachers that the Italian youths always harboured and evinced violent hatred, because they imagined that both those monastic orders, each in its way, attempted to interfere with the right of private judgment. So long as a man confesses and takes the Sacrament, christens his children and pays his marriage fees, what business is it of monk, priest or Pope to pry into his thoughts or probe his heart? And the priest, as we have seen, relying more on discipline than conviction and satisfied with mere outward observance, exerts all his influence to crush inquiry and discountenance enthusiasm. A religion all of the senses suits a Southern temperament; and down to the present day in Rome the opera and ballet were always worse than third rate and poorly attended, because the theatre could not compete with the Church in the pomp and circumstance of mere scenic effects. In the midst of all this material devotion and spiritual death, nothing comes more natural than tolerance, yet nothing is more hopeless than proselytism; nothing easier than to overthrow the Church as it was, yet nothing more difficult than to rebuild it as it ought to be.

The Italians take no little credit upon themselves for having rid the world of the Pope-King. Inasmuch as they have stormed the last stronghold of priestly tyranny, they look upon themselves as the founders of religious liberty; but they in reality understand nothing either about religion or about the freedom on which it should be based. Religion is for them the priest's business. Faith in the doctor of the soul must be as implicit and passive as in the physician of the body, and the healthy should have as little to do with either as they can. For those who want a Church, there should be one of some sort or other. What matters it how many new dogmas are proclaimed, or how many saints are canonized, if no one compels you to believe in them? Why should you distress yourself about the Pope's infallibility, if you are allowed to laugh at it in your sleeve? There have been prelates and there have been cardinals and even popes whose religion, if inquired into, would have been found as complete a blank as your own; but these went through life and rose from rank to rank in the hierarchy with a mere semblance and mockery of belief. Why should it not be so? Let it be free to any man to be a Christian, a sceptic, and even a hypocrite. *Dieu connaît ceux qui sont à Lui.* Let there be peace on earth, and let every man go to Heaven, or elsewhere, his own way.

The Italians do not understand why people who dissent from the Pope should necessarily agree

among themselves. They do not see the advantage of raising many Churches on the ruins of one. It would be, in their opinion, like "marrying the Pope and begetting a whole brood of infallibles." Waldensian, Independent and other Evangelical chapels, temples and schools, are now open in every town in Italy. No obstacle arises against the propagation of any belief, or the exercise of any form of worship. But any interest which these dissenting congregations at first awakened has died off long since. "Transalpine nations," the Italians say, "have shed torrents of blood for the faith and they have after all more religions than sauces. Italy has acquiesced in one form of belief, and she can now have as much religion as is good for her or have none."

Practically however matters do not proceed as smoothly as people here could fain flatter themselves. Sensible men question whether the religion Italy has is good for her, or whether it is good for her to have none. Even the staunchest *esprit fort* has some notion that the religion which he rejects and spurns for himself is good enough for others—good above all things for the ignorant masses. The law, he thinks, is only one tie upon man, but religion binds him twice over. Society can only be kept together by moral education, and morality must be based upon some creed—a good one if it is to be found, but at any rate a creed that will give human action other motives than those of this world. But

in a country where priests exist, where they are so numerous and so powerful, and where their existence is deemed a necessity even by their worst enemies, how can the freedom of the Church and State be reconciled? Simply, as it would seem, either by seeing that the Church fulfils her real mission or by depriving her of her monopoly. In other words, either by governing the Church or by encouraging dissent; either, as in Germany, by submitting the priesthood to the control of civil laws, or, as in England, by allowing and countenancing earnest and honest discussion to such an extent as to enable truth and morality to issue out of the interminable battle of the Churches.

The Italians have hitherto shown themselves incapable of steadily following either course. Reform in the Church from within or without has been found impracticable, any movement towards it foundering against the timidity of the Government and the apathy of public opinion. Instruments of destruction—men of the temper of Gavazzi, Passaglia, D'Andrea—have at all times been at hand, but constructive genius has nowhere showed itself. Not only have the people been left without leaders, but they have not even been encouraged to follow the guidance of their own sound instincts. Nowhere has the inability of Italian liberalism to deal with religious, or rather ecclesiastical, matters been made more manifest than in the contest that is now and has been for above a year raging

between the Bishop of Mantua and the peasantry of his diocese.

Monsignor Rota, a violent Ultramontane, was formerly Bishop of Guastalla, where his enmity to the cause of his country at the time of the war of 1866 made him so obnoxious as to compel the Government to remove him by main force. This alleged persecution from the civil authorities won him promotion from his ecclesiastical superiors, and he was appointed to the See of Mantua, vacant by the death of Monsignor Corte—a prelate between whom and his flock there had always reigned perfect harmony and good-will. Bent on mischief from his very accession, Bishop Rota chose his parish priests among the most turbulent of the clergy, and the result was that the peasantry resisted the intrusion of the Bishop's nominees, and in some of the rural districts they called together the heads of families and elected their own parsons.

The phenomenon was novel in Italy, and deserved greater attention than it at first obtained.

The Mantuan peasantry knew nothing of Old Catholicism; they had hardly heard anything about the schism initiated by Döllinger in Germany and by Loyson in Switzerland. But a vague tradition that the people should count for something in the government of the Church was lurking among them, as among all those people of Northern Italy whose archdiocese of Milan for a long period, in the days of

the Lombard Free Cities, claimed to be independent of the See at Rome, and often stood up in antagonism to it. By a too liberal interpretation of the maxim of a "Free Church in a Free State," and by the enactment of the Papal guarantees, these peasants thought that the Government of the King of Italy had shown themselves unmindful of the people's interests, and that they had abdicated those rights of the State which were the people's rights, giving the clergy an ascendency which, in the very worst times, was at least tempered by the Concordats. That the Church should be free when the Church consists simply of the clergy, and when the clergy itself is oppressed by a hierarchy acknowledging the most arbitrary and absolute supremacy of an Infallible Head, is a doctrine which leaves the people no alternative between enslavement and rebellion—no escape from priestly despotism except in secular anarchy. Those Mantuan peasants have fallen into no heresy, they have attempted no schism; but they have certainly risen in opposition to their ordinary. They have broken the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline; they are out of the law as the Pope understands it and as the King's Government accepts it. The King's Government have engaged to allow the Pope the free exercise of his spiritual authority, to acknowledge any bishop that the Pope may please to appoint, and any priest the bishop may think fit to ordain, reserving, at the utmost, the right to refuse the *Exequatur* to the

bishop or the *Placet* to the priests in those cases in which no notice of the appointment is given to the civil authorities, but practically waiving even that right, and winking at the intrusion of such contumacious and notoriously disaffected men as Monsignor Rota and his nominees.

The Bishop of Mantua, as might be expected, has visited the rebellion of the peasantry of Dosso, Frassino and Paludano with a thundering decree of excommunication; but his Bull will most undoubtedly fall a mere *brutum fulmen* among the people; for the elected parish priest is in possession, between him and his flock perfect harmony exists, and there is now no power in the State to lend the Church the assistance of the secular arm, and to enforce excommunication by eviction. So long as his people are with him, the elected parson is as safe and inviolable at the altar and in the pulpit as the Pope himself in the Chair of St. Peter's. The same security and independence will be extended to all those parishes in the Mantuan diocese where a priest may be found to go hand-in-hand with the people in opposition to the overbearing bishop. Already the old Duchy of Mantua begins to exhibit the phenomenon of a bishop without a diocese, and a diocese without a bishop; and what might not be the effect of so easy and so signal a victory of the people over a prelate in a country like Italy, where not only the mass of the laity but many thousands of the lower clergy are fretting against Papal and

prelatic tyranny, and aspiring to a more liberal and equitable government of the Church?

Unfortunately there is no one in Italy to direct or encourage the movement. The Government, in whose hands is still the administration of the temporalities of the Church, refuse to sanction the people's election, or to subsidize the priests whose appointment is, in their opinion, illegal. Intelligent and liberal laymen, with few exceptions, sneer at the incipient secession as something beneath their notice. The want of real sympathy between the high and low in the social scale, too evident everywhere in Italy, is nowhere so apparent as in these matters relating to the relations between the clergy and the people. Cultivated men assert that some sort of religion is a necessity for the uneducated classes; but no one seems to care what the religion is, or to what extent it may be compatible with the most natural and legitimate aspirations of free men. "If you want religion go to the priests," they seem to say; "if you object to the priests, try to do without religion." Upon this principle the priest's mental and moral ascendency is insured even where his legal authority is endangered. The truth is no human being in Italy really troubles his head about religious subjects. The freethinker's scepticism is something as flimsy and irrational as the devotee's superstition. Conviction is nowhere deeply rooted or soundly based. There is no attempt on the part of any man to account for his faith or disbelief,

either to others or to himself. Religion, as I have said, is considered the priest's business, and hatred and contempt for the priest is often found in conjunction with abject subjection to him; while a secret dread of the priest as frequently blends with the scorn and aversion with which he is disavowed and denounced. Full and thorough emancipation from the Church has hardly ever been attained by any man in Italy. The cry, "*Un prete! un prete!*" has been heard from the death-bed of reputed *esprits forts*, whose life had been a perpetual scoffing and railing at the clergy. The teaching of centuries has established Sacerdotalism in Italy on a basis that perhaps no progress of education will ever shake. The priest, in the people's mind, is not merely identified with God, but is above God himself. By placing the power of binding and unbinding in his hands, one would say that God has abdicated his authority in behalf of the priest—that he has sunk to the condition of a *Roi Fainéant*, leaving all business in the hands of his minister, and accepting the minister's decree as binding upon himself. Hence the call for a priest from a dying Italian, as if the ear of God could only be reached through the priest's intercession—as if the priest alone controlled the floodgates of Infinite Mercy.

No nation can be said to be truly free where a man does not dare to die without a priest. No country can attain real intellectual progress where

God is nominally said to be in heaven, but where in reality He is handled by the priest at the altar, and carried about from house to house in the priest's pocket. I do not believe the day will ever come in which this religion, this mere materialization of the idea of the Deity, will be calmly considered and maturely discussed in Italy. Religion in that country can only be other than it is by ceasing to be. The Pope, I am afraid, is right. His Church is based on a rock against which Truth can never prevail. Mere freedom of inquiry will never reform or demolish Catholicism. Italy cannot hope to achieve more by or for liberty than France or Belgium, England or Germany accomplished before her. There is hardly any country in Europe less overrun by Ultramontanism than Italy. The nation's antagonism to the Temporal Power saves it to some extent from utter spiritual subjugation. But to real intellectual and moral emancipation from priestly ascendency Italy either does not aspire, or she knows not how to give her aspirations direction and scope.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PUBLIC SECURITY IN ITALY.

The Knife in Italy—Duelling, High and Low—The Plebani Verdict—Italian Juries—Italian Magistrates: the Bassano Case—Italian Criminal Proceedings—Italian Prisons—Brigandage—Condition of Sicily—Symptoms of Progress.

As I was about to leave Siena after a short stay, that interesting old city had just been the theatre of a startling tragedy.

A well-to-do citizen, by name Piero Pieraccini, a butcher by trade, and keeping a stall in the famous old market-place of the city, for many centuries known as "Il Campo," but now vainly re-baptized under the name of "Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele," was accosted by a young man of bad character, who asked him for a loan of one hundred francs. Pieraccini was the most popular man in the city, well known for his free-handed benevolence and especially for the patronage which he extended to all talent, and which had won him the intimate friendship of artists and writers, amongst them that of the refined Pittor-Cavaliere, the late Massimo d'Azeglio. In this instance however either the exorbitance of the demand, or the tone in which

it was urged, or the precedents of the petitioner, indisposed Pieraccini, who met the application with a flat refusal, whereupon the young ruffian drew a knife and stabbed the butcher twice to the heart, killing him on the spot. A crowd witnessed the deed, and Pieraccini was "so dear to the multitude," said the account of the occurrence in the *Gazzetta d'Italia*, "that the people would have inflicted summary justice on the criminal, had not carabineers and soldiers with the utmost difficulty rescued him from their fury."

This incident occurred at about twelve o'clock at noon, while I was lounging along the street or suite of streets, from which several slides or flights of steps lead to the place which was at that very moment the scene of the murder. Four hours later I walked to the station to be in time for the five o'clock train, and both on my way to the station and on the platform I was in the midst of a crowd. But I noticed no emotion and heard no remark which could raise a suspicion that anything extraordinary had happened. Incidents of this nature are and have always been, unfortunately, too common in Italy to create a very deep or lasting impression. So soon as the first commotion caused among the spectators of a murderous deed has subsided, there follows a general anxiety to hush up every allusion to it. There is no use, the Italians seem to think, "in crying over spilt blood." It was in the present instance only personal regard

for the murdered man that for a moment kindled the popular wrath against the murderer. But, having escaped from the hands of the infuriated mob, the criminal's life is certainly in no danger from the law. The Tuscan lawgivers of 1859 abolished capital punishment "for ever," and the present Minister of Justice, Vigliani, who like all other Piedmontese long insisted on adjudging the penalty of death in cases of premeditated murder, was in the end inconsistent enough to give in to popular clamour, and in his new scheme of a Penal Code he limited the application of capital punishment to the cases of regicide and parricide. In Italy, however, it is less the leniency of the law than the uncertainty of its application that deprives it of all its deterrent power. Though Pieraccini's murder was perpetrated in the light of day before a hundred witnesses, though the criminal has been taken red-handed and is known as an old offender, months, if not years, will elapse before he is brought to trial for his guilt, and by that time a revulsion of feelings will be wrought in the people's minds, so that the very men who, without the interference of the police, would have lynched him on the spot, will, if they sit in the jury-box, plead extenuating circumstances in the culprit's favour, and reduce his atrocious deed to mere manslaughter.

It is difficult to say what amount of bloodshed will ever shake the conviction so deeply rooted in the hearts of all Italians, and especially of the

Tuscans, that their country is "too civilized for the scaffold"; but there is no doubt that murder of the most heinous nature is by no means on the decrease there, and that the custom of carrying knives, pistols and other treacherous weapons becomes daily more prevalent, not only among men of a certain class, but also among women and mere children.

With persons of higher rank murder assumes a different, yet hardly a less repulsive shape. A few months ago a youth belonging to one of the noblest families of Florence, the Marchese Cosimo Ridolfi, attended the first performance of a ballet at the Pergola Theatre. Opinions as to the merits of the piece were at variance, and while Ridolfi with a party in his box were hissing, another party in an adjoining box, conspicuous among whom was a youth named Ludovico Falevolti, expressed their approbation by loud applause. Angry looks and cross words were exchanged between the hostile factions, craning over the parapet of their boxes. The dispute was followed up in the corridor behind the boxes as the parties were leaving the house, and a meeting between Ridolfi and Falevolti was arranged at a friend's villa at Antella. The weapon chosen was the broadsword, with leave given to the combatants to cut and thrust, and after a few passes Falevolti fell pierced to the heart by his adversary's weapon.

"A common-place, silly duel, arising out of the

most paltry squabble," it may be said. But see the result. Months later Ridolfi is brought into court at the Florence Assizes, when the jury, led by counsel to the conclusion that "Falevolti had in his headlong onset inadvertently rushed on the point of Ridolfi's sword," acquitted this latter of all intent to murder, and the court condemned him "to be banished for three months to some place at six miles' distance from his ordinary residence," or in other words, sent him on a pleasure trip to Milan, Rome, or Paris, or for a *villeggiatura* to some country house just out of town.

Let this mere mockery of a sentence be taken as evidence of the cheap rate at which human life is held in Italy. It may seem that little connexion exists between the "affair of honour" out of which Ridolfi came with so much ease, and the vulgar butchery for which Pieraccini's murderer is still awaiting his trial. But the fact is that in these days of equality high and low seem to claim the right of killing one another, each in his own way, and that the law makes no very great difference between one murder and another. The only one in this country for whom it was written "Thou shalt not kill" is the hangman, and the almost certain immunity from adequate punishment, while it encourages the worst malefactor to break the law, in very many instances drives even the pacific and inoffensive citizen, either in self-defence or by way of retaliation, to take the law in his own hand.

Here is an instance of the readiness with which persons of the lower orders settle their differences in Palermo:—

"There had been high words between two young men residing in that city, one of them a student, seventeen years old, by name Sprescia; the other a Calabrian, twenty-two years of age, employed in some subordinate office in the public lottery, and recently married. About the original cause of the dispute nothing is known, but having met, yesterday, in Piazza Ballaro, they seemed to refer to the subject, and agreed to settle the difference with their knives. Each of them went home for his weapon; but presently they were seen again in the square, where they hired a hackney coach *(carrozzella)*, and drove beyond the English Garden to San Lorenzo. Here they quitted the vehicle and proceeded on foot to a lonely spot where they could go to work safe from intrusion. Then they drew their knives, fell to in grim silence, and drew blood in several encounters, till at last they both received such desperate wounds that they could no longer stand. They were raised from the ground by some passers by, and conveyed to the town hospital; but Sprescia died on the way, and the Calabrian still lies in mortal danger."

The *Palermo Gazette*, from which the above is quoted, describes the encounter as "a duel like another," and exalts "the great courage" of the combatants, and the "fair play" observed on both

sides, which it claims as "characteristic of a high-mettled, brave population." Certainly the deed was atrocious, and deserves to be set down as a deliberate double-murder. But is a duel under any circumstances anything else? When the combatants meet in earnest and fight to the last drop of their blood, the choice of weapons cannot greatly aggravate or extenuate the atrocity of the deed; and it is questionable whether the presence of friends to see "fair play" does not add to the cold blooded nature of the murder. Still the knife is a dangerous weapon, and southern people ought to be weaned from it at any cost. The evil lies in the familiarity of all men of the lowest classes with it, and in the hot temper which prompts the hand to use it upon the slightest provocation. It is for the law and for its executors to check these bloody propensities by inspiring salutary terror; but how can this object be attained in a community where, after the law has prescribed the lightest imaginable punishment for the gravest offences, the Court still further shields the criminal by admitting a violent temper and even intoxication as extenuating circumstances?

But cases of a far more shocking nature, in which either a false sympathy for the offender, or political animosity, or worse causes, conspire to defeat the purposes of justice, are matters of only too frequent occurrence in this country. What, for instance, could be more inexplicable than the sentence by

which the Court of Assizes at Alessandria disposed of the murderer of the monk, Father Plebani?

The murdered man, a native of Ascoli, in the Marches, about fifty years old, of a "patrician family," was a monk of the barefooted Carmelite order in Rome. Between him and a nun, by name Amalia Menghini, a native of Oriolo, in the province of Rome, a criminal and sacrilegious intimacy was kept up for several years, all the guilt of which rests upon the friar. The consequence of this long life of sin and shame was that the nun was induced to quit her convent, and the secret connexion between the guilty pair continued till the monk became weary of it, and hoped to be rid of the woman by repairing first to Ancona, and then to Alessandria in Piedmont, where he assumed the name of Francesco Barbarino. Amalia however did not lose sight of him; she corresponded with him, and lived, as she had done before, out of funds which he supplied. Father Plebani was a man of considerable wealth, and was supposed to hold in his hands a large sum of money belonging to Amalia, which had been assigned to her by the monk himself, to be given as a dowry in the event of her finding a husband. The husband, it seems, was found in the person of one Saverio Nobili, of Rome, who professed his readiness to marry if the dowry was forthcoming. It was with a view to obtain this money that Amalia, with the full knowledge and consent of Plebani, went to Alessandria. But she

took with her her brother Guido; and the presence of this unbidden guest alarmed the monk, who, anxious to rid himself both of brother and sister, first paid them a sum of 9,000 f.; then perceiving that they wanted more and made no sign of leaving the house, he came to the resolution of giving them the slip and escaping to America. His intention, communicated by him to some of his friends, came to the knowledge of his guests and determined their action.

Plebani, Amalia and her brother slept on the night of the 12th to 13th October in three adjoining rooms, with open doors between them, so that it was easy for Guido to pass into his sister's chamber, and for both to proceed to the apartment where the monk was sleeping. The result was that in the morning Father Plebani was found dead in his bed, with a heavy blow from some blunt instrument on his head, and thirty knife-wounds in various parts of his body. His money and scrip, amounting it is said to 55,000 f., had disappeared, and so had his young friends, Amalia and Guido. These were however soon tracked and arrested at Voghera with the dead man's money in their possession, and they freely avowed that they had killed their host and taken his money, accounting however for the deed in their own way. The defence was limited to this—that Amalia went to Alessandria to ask her own; that her brother only accompanied her as her natural protector; that Plebani would either

not admit her claim at all, or not to its full amount; that the object of the brother and sister in entering the monk's room was merely to urge their demand; and that on the monk resisting it a scuffle had ensued in which Plebani lost his life. The Court had no other statement to go by than that of the prisoners, for the dead man could tell no tales. Whether or not the monk was awake when his guests entered the room might be doubtful; but what is certain is that he did not die in his sleep, as a chair shattered to pieces, Guido's loaded stick broken at the point, and sundry bruises and even a cut in the young man's body, were accepted as evidence of the stubborn fight the wretched monk had made for his life.

On the strength of this "excessive resistance" *(eccesso di difera)* of the victim, the jury, acquitting Menghini of all intention either to rob or murder, found him only guilty of manslaughter, alleging also the "tender age" *(minore età)* of the prisoner (thirty years old!), and the Court sentenced him to one year's imprisonment. As to Amalia, she had it was alleged upon her brother's statement borne no part in the strife, but had only stood with a lighted candle at the chamber-door, and she ran away terrified soon after the first blows were struck. Her innocence was therefore proved in the opinion of the jury. The verdict was, "Not Guilty," and she was instantly acquitted.

"The population of Alessandria," we are told by

the Roman *Riforma*, "was highly satisfied with the result of the trial and convinced of the legal and moral justice of the verdict." And the journal proceeds to dwell on the particulars of this case as irrefragable evidence of the "corruption and profligacy which had been allowed for years to hide in the Roman convents, and which nothing short of this shocking catastrophe would have brought to light." It is too clear therefore to what passions we must trace the distortion of right and wrong which led to so flagrant a miscarriage of justice in the Court of Assizes. The jury and the press saw in the murdered man only the monk. Gaetano Plebani was no doubt an infamous hypocrite and a remorseless villain, and had *he* been on his trial hardly any punishment could have been too much for him. But it is not easy to see how all the enormity of his crimes could justify, or even to any extent extenuate, the act of his murderers. It was not because Amalia had been seduced by him, or because Guido felt himself called upon to avenge the honour of his family, that the brother and sister sought the fugitive monk at Alessandria. It was only because they were aware of his willingness to compound for his sins by money, and they hoped to extort a larger sum than he was prepared to give. It is easy to assert that Amalia and Guido entered the monk's room in the dead of the night simply to talk the matter over with him; but that Guido had a loaded stick and a knife in his hand, and that the marks of

both were on the dead man's body, no one denies; nor that after the monk's death his money had vanished and was found a few days later in his guests' pockets. The prisoners may not have meditated murder and robbery; but the handiwork, the traces of which were behind them and on them, bears a very strong resemblance to both, and it would be dangerous to deal leniently with such deeds simply because it could be proved that their perpetrators were no worse than the man who succumbed to their blows. The murder could not be justified even if it were evident that the monk, resisting the intrusion of his midnight visitors, had been the first to strike; nor would even the fact that every penny taken from him after his death was the young woman's undisputed property have lessened the guilt of the robbery.

One might have expected on the part of the Italian press a more outspoken and severe condemnation of the verdict. The *Perseveranza* limits its comments to a description of the prisoners, stating that Amalia had neither beauty nor "distinction" to recommend her, and looked like a "coarse and dowdy cook," while Guido had "a lowering brow and truculent eye, and was abrupt and curt in his speech." And the *Gazzetta d'Italia* is satisfied with throwing all the blame on the jury, declaring that the institution—a bad Italian copy of a bad French copy of a time-honoured English practice—"seems unsuited to the people of this

country and needs a thorough reform." But in Italy the sentence of a Court of Assizes is not necessarily final, and the case could be sent up for revision to higher tribunals, were there not throughout the country a morbid feeling akin to that expressed by the populace of Alessandria, that the verdict, whether or not legal, is certainly moral, inasmuch as by the murder the outrageously criminal conduct of an inmate of a Roman cloister, which under Papal rule would, in all probability, have baffled detection and most certainly have escaped punishment, has been laid before the world, while by a rough sort of poetical justice the offender's sin has "found him out." But it is difficult to know what is to become of a society if it be admitted that a person in Amalia's position may, however aggrieved, be allowed to do herself justice with her own hand, or by the hand of an accomplice nearly related to her.

That the jury as an institution does not work well in Italy is a point about which no two opinions can be entertained, and it is not certain that the modifications introduced by a law voted by Parliament at the close of the session will very materially improve it. The Italians, it seems, have too tender hearts to sit in judgment on their erring brethren. *Fanfulla*, who is less prone to flatter the people than the generality of the newspapers, entertains us with a variety of striking verdicts, all arising from that mawkish softness which enlists the

jury's sympathies on the side of the law-breaker. In Naples especially the acquittal of criminals seems to be determined by the most singular considerations. "The lady's-maid of the Duchess of Vastogirardi," we are told, "lately disappeared, taking with her the Duchess's diamonds. The jury find that 'those jewels exercised a terrible fascination on the poor maid and she was driven to the theft by an irresistible force,' so of course she is acquitted. The fault," continues *Fanfulla*, "entirely lay with the Duchess, and I am astonished that the jury did not give the verdict of guilty against that lady for leading the poor maid into temptation."

The leniency of the jury, excessive in all cases, is especially carried to absurd extremes when the political propensities of the twelve men in the box come into play. "A tax-gatherer at Naples absconds with a large sum of the public money he had on trust. It is pleaded that the money embezzled was after all the people's money, the people's blood, drained from the people's veins by a tyrannical Government. The tax-gatherer was himself one of the people, and what belonged to them all was simply appropriated for the benefit of one of them. The tax-gatherer, as a redresser of wrongs who had baffled the Government's rapacity, was unanimously acquitted."

In this case the verdict was prompted by instincts of rabid democracy and by a systematic hostility

to all established power, the inevitable consequences of the misrule of centuries. In another instance the uppermost feeling of the jury was hatred of the Church and of all religion. "A miscreant had fired a gun at random in a church and hit in the leg a gentleman who was there at his devotions. If, the jury reasoned, the gentleman had not been at church, if he had not been a besotted bigot grovelling in abject superstition, his leg would not have found itself in the way of the bullet. The jury could do no less than acquit the prisoner, and they deserve credit for discretion and forbearance in not having convicted the gentleman of obstruction of a free-thinker's free bullet."

But it is not the jury merely that stand in the way of a fair and strict administration of justice in Italy, nor is it only the false sentiment of the people abhorrent of the idea of bloodshed on the scaffold that makes witnesses reluctant to give evidence in the most flagrant cases and against the most notorious malefactors. In many districts of the Peninsula, and especially in the Two Sicilies and in Romagna, where the worst crimes are most prevalent, the criminal classes insure impunity by intimidation. Magistrates, jurymen and witnesses are aware that they carry their lives in their hand, and that the conviction of one ruffian exposes all who had a hand in it to the vengeance of his numerous associates. The demoralization in those provinces is very general and reaches the highest ranks in the

social scale. Nor are, it is to be feared, the judges even of the Supreme Courts inaccessible to other considerations besides terror. Witness the shocking incident which occurred very lately at Venice.

"A wealthy Jewish merchant, by name Bassano, had been with several others tried and convicted as a receiver of stolen goods, and had been condemned to four years' imprisonment. But he appealed against the sentence, and he was admitted to bail upon his own sole security for the sum of 1,500 f.; no sooner did he see himself at large than he embarked for Greece, where he is now setting the law of his country at open defiance." The only explanation offered is the following. Bassano was found guilty and condemned by the Court of Assizes in Venice. He got his case referred to superior Courts, and applied for his temporal release on bail. The Public Prosecutor admitted him to bail to the amount of 20,000 f. or 25,000 f. Bail was however refused by the Court of Appeal in Venice. The prisoner then brought his suit before the Court of Cassation in Florence, which annulled the decision of the Venetian Court of Appeal, and transmitted the affair to the Court of Appeal at Lucca. It was this last Court which not only accepted bail, but reduced it to the sum of 1,500 f. The prisoner paid the money, and was allowed by the police, whose duty it was to follow his movements, to put the sea between him and the penalty which he richly deserved.

The outrage is enormous, and it is impossible not

to agree with the Venetian correspondent of the *Gazzetta d'Italia*, who makes himself the mouthpiece of the public indignation, and reminds the present rulers of Italy that "Venice was accustomed to a far different administration of justice under Austrian domination." The scandal is great in itself, and comes closely upon another incident of a different nature, but even more scandalous. "A young man of unblemished reputation, named Berri, had been, through a mistake, mixed up in a case of forgery. He had to endure eight months' imprisonment awaiting his trial; but no sooner did he appear in Court than he was discharged, being fully acquitted of all complicity, not by the jury, but by the Public Prosecutor, and before one word had been spoken by the counsel in his defence. But the release came too late. The physical sufferings of his long confinement, and the mental distress at the disgrace his appearance in the dock on a charge of felony might inflict upon his honourable family, so worked upon his feelings that when the Prosecutor avowed his error and declared him a free man, the youth was overpowered by the too sudden turn in his fortunes, was conveyed from the dock in a state of insensibility, and died a few days later, leaving his old parents and a young wife to mourn his tragic end."

There is no doubt that the inefficiency of the magistrates in Italy is in a great measure the result of the unwieldiness of that French system of pro-

cedure which has now been extended all over the Italian kingdom. There are still in Italy, be it remembered, five Courts of Cassation and twenty-three Courts of Appeal. When fault is found with this absurd redundance of superior and supreme magistrates, the answer is that in spite of it the gaols are crammed with prisoners awaiting their trial year after year. But may it not be that this repletion of the prisons occurs, not in spite of, but because of the multitude of tribunals? Can any one say how frequently, in all this complication of wheels within wheels, the movement is retarded and the machine thrown out of gear?

Take the case of the Jew Bassano for instance. The man had been brought before a jury in a criminal cause. He had summoned the best counsel to his defence. His trial had been held in the light of day, with open doors and before a large and deeply-interested audience. The man himself and his accomplices were found guilty and sentence was passed. What more was there to be said or done? Surely in England, in a similar case, nothing more. But in Italy as in France the criminal had a right of appeal, and it was under pretence of preparing for a second trial that Bassano was admitted to bail, and thereby purchased his delivery.

There may arise frequent occasions to revise a judgment in a civil cause, because right and wrong in civil matters depend on a labyrinth of statutes

and precedents of which only the most experienced jurists may be able to follow the thread. But in criminal cases, and in a case like Bassano's, a mere child can pronounce on the question of fact, and as to the application of the law the Court is, in these Latin countries, fettered down to the letter of the Code by which the penalty is adjudged beforehand. If the magistrates of the Court of Assizes, seven of them, are worth their salt, what is the good of this double appeal, unless it be to trouble clear water and allow quibble and chicane to fish in it? The stolen goods were found in the Jew's house; he is at a loss to explain how they got there. He is proved to have been in close connexion with his accomplices, notorious thieves and "thieves' fences." There is an article in the Code which places the thief's auxiliary on a par with the thief, and which only allows the judge a certain latitude between a *maximum* and a *minimum* of the penalty. The judge uses his discretion, and what room is left for appeal, or how can there arise a question of bail?

Everything in these criminal and correctional courts in Italy seems studied to cause loss of time. A silly brawl between Clericals and Liberals, in which an Englishman, Mr. Vansittart, was mixed up, was made the subject of a judicial inquiry, which lasted nine months. An English police or county magistrate would have disposed of it summarily in half an hour, and his decision would, there

is no doubt, have been at least as fair and equitable as the one arrived at here. In Italy many persons who are in the end let off as guiltless are made to suffer months and even years of *Carcere Preventivo*. The law allows no redress, no indemnity or even apology, to the sufferer. "It was all a mistake, and let the prisoner thank his stars it is found out." A postmaster at Messina, called Stanislao Rossi, writes to the *Opinione*, stating that he has been shut up under some charge in July, 1871, and after twenty-seven months' imprisonment he has not yet been allowed to see the face of his judge. His case was to have come before the Court on the 10th of March of this year, then on the 28th of April, again on the 17th of June, and on the 16th of September, and was invariably postponed before the appointed day arrived. Twenty-seven months! Ought there not to be a penalty awarded to magistrates who, either through negligence or incapacity, expose persons committed to their charge to such unnecessary and, in many cases, unmerited slow torture?

Perhaps the time may come when an Italian Keeper of the Seals will consider whether the administration of justice might not be greatly simplified, and its functions be more efficiently discharged by a sweeping reduction of the *personnel*. The mere fact that the judges are so many involves the necessity of their being wretchedly paid, and the salary, especially of the lower courts

(Tribunali di Prima Istanza) is so much below that of an English tipstaff or usher, that clever and experienced lawyers would as soon consent to be put on the tread-mill as on the bench; and judges have to be recruited among young briefless barristers fit for no better employment. That in so large a long-robed flock there should be a black sheep is only too natural, nor would it be surprising if a judge, doomed almost to starvation with a large family, were not in every instance inaccessible to temptation; for after all the best citadel in which mere human means can entrench the conscience of a public functionary is independence.

Another great hindrance to the establishment of public security in Italy arises from the state of the prisons. "Four prisoners have escaped from the gaol at Palmi; one of them was under capital sentence, another condemned to penal servitude for life, and the two others were awaiting their trial for murder." Announcements of this nature are matters of frequent occurrence in this country. "Prisons in Italy," it has been humorously observed, "are merely schools of gymnastics, built for the benefit of working men bent on displaying their skill and agility in breaking from them." It would seem as if no one here need remain in gaol unless he particularly objects to quit it. As an invariable rule the most dangerous and desperate criminals are those who thus contrive to cheat the hangman, and it is impossible to resist the conviction that their

escape is effected with the connivance of the men whose duty it ought to be to prevent it. Cases of this nature are most frequent in the southern provinces; but the evil has a tendency to spread all over the country, and reveals a state of general negligence and corruption in the administration, which might well afford serious cause of uneasiness to statesmen.

Many of the Italian prisons are old and ill built. They are not unfrequently broken-down convents and monasteries, fitted up anyhow for their new duties, here and there girt with a fencing-wall surmounted by turrets, from the loopholes of which hapless soldiers may be seen doing for hours harder penance than the malefactors clanking their chains in the courtyard beneath. All these gaols are terribly over-crowded and, as from sheer want of space, their inmates are thrown together at every hour of the day, a wholesome discipline among them is not easily enforced, and plots for clandestine or violent outbreaks are perpetually hatching. A new state of things, people think, may be expected from the construction of vast, solid and well-designed penitentiaries. But these require time and money, and "while the grass grows"—while the Minister of Finance is meditating on his penny-wise efforts to balance accounts, the prisons remain as they are, and great, in consequence, is the demoralization of the country. A scheme for the establishment of a penal colony in Borneo, or

in some other semi-civilized region, has long been in contemplation; but that also cannot soon be brought to maturity, and Italian statesmen should not be too easily satisfied with schemes of remote and uncertain remedies when they have to deal with present and urgent evils. The fact which stares them in the face is that the statistics of crime in this country give appalling results, and the disorder is in a great measure the consequence of the almost invariable commutation of a capital sentence into one of imprisonment, and of the nearly absolute certainty of a speedy escape from imprisonment. The gaoler exercises as little deterrent influence in Italy as the hangman.

It is easy to imagine the dismay into which the district of Palmi was thrown when it received the tidings of the escape of those four ruffians. Their capture had been effected after some hard struggle in which the Carabinieri or the Bersaglieri, their auxiliaries, had risked, and some of them lost their lives. Though the prisoners' deeds are notorious, and they have perhaps as many lives on their consciences as hairs on their heads, it was not without infinite trouble that a few trembling wretches could be brought to give evidence against them. It was with even greater difficulty that twelve independent citizens could be made to agree upon a verdict, or to abstain from urging "extenuating circumstances"; but at last the men are convicted, sentence is passed, and the

savages are removed from court uttering fearful imprecations, and vowing vengeance against all who had directly or indirectly a hand in bringing them to justice. The Court, the jury, and witnesses might well smile at this exhibition of impotent fury; they have the consciousness of their well-performed duty to re-assure them, and the miscreants are, or ought to be, put for ever out of the way of doing harm. But what if stone walls are mere cobwebs? what if gaolers and turnkeys and galley-slave drivers are little better than the convicts themselves? and if, in a few days, one hears that these are again at large, prowling about their old haunts, consorting with new associates, and planning the fulfilment of those dire threats of vengeance with which they shocked and terrified the Court? Can public security ever be based upon such a state of things? One hears that gaol-birds have been able to break from gaol, but not that the gaolers have been brought to account. Are not the agents of the public force answerable for the safe custody of the criminals committed to their charge? Should there not be laws to condemn the director of a prison to bear the penalty from which, through his negligence or connivance, his prisoner has been enabled to withdraw himself?

It is no wonder, under such circumstances, if Italy finds it so difficult to kill that brigandage which she has so often scotched. We hear of band after band, those of Manzi, Crocco, Donato, Cipriano la

Gala, &c., being surrounded by the troops and destroyed. The Carabineers, who had before vainly captured them, and are at the pains of risking their lives in new encounters with the same adversaries, take good care to make short work with them, unwilling as they naturally are to allow their captives again to slip through the hands of temporizing magistrates, stolid or cowardly juries, and negligent or unfaithful gaolers. But notwithstanding all the zeal and activity displayed by gendarmes and soldiers in the discharge of their duties, brigandage is a still-living and ever renascent institution in the country. There has hardly been a season of late more saddened by the occurrence of startling, tragic events than the present one. We had in May the case of Count Claudio Faina attacked by brigands in masks near Orvieto, and carried by them into the mountains, where, as the ransom put upon his head was not instantly forthcoming, he was found dead in a field of corn, evidently despatched by his captors, who, pursued by the public force, found him a hindrance in their flight. The incident was followed before the end of the same month by a similar outrage near Palermo, where Baron Sgadari only saved his life by the payment of 63,000 f. People had hardly recovered from the shock of these disastrous tidings, when they received the intelligence of the assassination of a highly-valued magistrate at Parma, and of the "mysterious disappearance" of one of his colleagues at Bologna, to say

nothing of very frequent instances of burglary and highway robbery attended with murder, not only in Romagna and the southern provinces, but also in the north, in Lombardy, and Piedmont itself. The Government seems to have been roused from its habitual indolence, and measures have been taken to break up the society of the *Accoltellatori* in Romagna, the *Camorra* in Naples, and the *Mafia* in Sicily; but it is evidently necessary so to modify the criminal legislation of the country as to award severer punishments, and enforce their strictest execution.

In no part of Italy do matters bear a less hopeful aspect than in the island of Sicily. There, and especially in the provinces of Palermo and Girgenti, "persons who have occasion to travel are compelled to hire a whole body-guard—a little army with van and rear, and with linkmen or torch-bearers for the night, the caravan proceeding warily at a foot's pace, and employing two or three days to get over a distance of eight or ten hours' march. This state of things is in a great measure the consequence of the peculiar conditions of the island." "As you proceed through these districts," says a traveller well acquainted with them, "you only meet towns at five or six hours from one another. You cross a desert country, all hilly and rugged, savagely picturesque, but without a church, a farm-house, or even a hovel to serve as a landmark; without a hedge or fence to give evidence of human habi-

tation. The land is not uncultivated, but the husbandmen are nowhere in sight. Nothing is to be seen but the slopes of the hills, all green with pasture, with broad patches of cornfields, and here and there the open mouths of brimstone quarries, a safe shelter for malefactors, who are often miners by day and robbers by night. The demoralization of the people is complete. The peasantry huddle together with their landlords in the wretched towns, and if they have occasion to visit their farms far away from their homes, they must compound with the robber either by paying blackmail, or by aiding and abetting him, supplying him with food and shelter, with arms and ammunition, and above all things with useful and timely information. The idea that the best security lies in bribing the bigger robber for protection against the minor thief is deeply rooted in the people's minds; and we hear of one Valvo, a famous brigand chief of Monte Maggiore, lately killed, whose safeguard was held of higher value than the escort of a whole regiment, and whose goodwill was therefore solicited and paid for at any price by the wealthiest proprietors."

Even in Sicily, however, men like Valvo get killed one by one, and the public force gradually asserts its ascendency. As under Pallavicini brigandage had almost entirely disappeared in the Neapolitan mainland, so in Sicily the establishment of public security seemed to have become possible

under the administration of Generals Della Rovere and Medici, and there are hopes that the work they commenced will proceed when taken up by equally able and steady hands. The opening of good mountain roads through the wildest districts has done wonders towards breaking up the most formidable robbers' nests, and enabling the public force to trace malefactors to their remotest hiding-places. There is no doubt that the work would soon be completed if the financial distress of the country did not interfere with the progress of those public undertakings which political as well as economical views recommend as necessary. The evil lies in the finance, the administration, the proceedings of the courts of law, the management of the prisons, the incentives held out to the idle and thriftless propensities of the people, the absence of a sound basis of education—it is, in one word, everything that is still at fault in Italy. The people here have as yet had enough to do to clear the ground of the rubbish of the old edifice. The new building is barely rising above the basement. The country is in the first stages of its self-governing experiment. A great deal of tripping and even backsliding is inevitable. But that much has been done is a fact which must not be denied, even in the teeth of the evidence that much remains to be done.

CHAPTER XIX.

ITALIAN LEGISLATION.

The King Opening Parliament—The Constitution of the Chamber—Loss of Time—Its Causes—Its Remedies—The Electoral Law—Municipal Institutions—Character of the Italian Parliament—Its Discretion—The Oath in Parliament—The Oath in Courts.

THE opening of the Italian Parliament by the King in person is a sufficiently imposing ceremony. All or nearly all who have to play a part in the solemnity are generally assembled in Rome two or three days before the time. His Majesty is sure to be at home in the Quirinal, closeted with his ministers daily and more than once in the day. The Princes Humbert and Amadeus are in attendance, the Princess Margaret alone sometimes tarrying behind at Monza, to the great regret of the Romans, whose love for her, spontaneous from the outset, has been raised to enthusiasm by the outrages hurled at her head by the most infamous organs of the Papal press. All the King's ministers have this year been in Rome for several days, and with them also the heads of the foreign embassies, with the exception of the French Minister, whose place is, or has often been, filled up by a mere

Secretary of Legation. Of the Senators and Deputies a large number is brought together for the "Royal sitting," a circumstance which augurs well for the session, and justifies a hope that the Italian legislators are quite in earnest, and determined to fulfil their duties with more than ordinary diligence—a hope not unfrequently leading to disappointment.

On such a day Rome makes it a point to look her best. The National Guards of the city brush up their coats and burnish their muskets at an early hour. Their battalions, spread out in double ranks alternately with the regular troops, are on duty all along the line of march, from the Quirinal down the steep hill of the Dataria, and the narrow Via dell' Umiltà, and further on along the Corso to Piazza Colonna and Piazza di Monte Citorio, where the main force is concentrated and drawn up in dense array before the House of Deputies. Fears are frequently entertained on account of the weather, for the ceremony generally takes place in November, at a season when a fine day cannot be reckoned upon even in these southern latitudes. Royalty however in most instances asserts its ascendency over the elements. The day contrives to keep bright and dry as long as required, and the display of flags and cloths, and bright equipages and ladies' dresses, by which the scene is enlivened, hardly ever comes to grief. The animation in the square before the Palace at Monte Citorio,

and in all the streets leading to it is sufficiently great to encourage a belief that all classes of the population take an equal interest in the proceedings of the day; and the palaces of the nobility on the Corso are as gaily decorated with the national colours as other public or private edifices. There is nothing like a festivity to soothe all animosities and to create outward harmony, and at least temporary unanimity in an Italian multitude.

Inside the Hall the galleries are crowded with the best company, the men either in their official uniforms or in strict evening costume, the ladies in every variety of the brightest hues, greatly outnumbering the other sex, and invading not only the Tribunes, but also the steps leading to the various rows of the Deputies' seats—a very few of the most daring even occupying the seats themselves. On the floor of the house and in the lower benches Senators and Deputies move about, shifting their ground and exchanging greetings with each other, or waving their hands to their acquaintances among the well-dressed multitude. In the diplomatic gallery, besides the wives of representatives of friendly States, several native ladies of rank thrust themselves, conspicuous among whom are the Ministers' wives, some of them neither by their costume nor their manners qualified for the place into which their husbands' official importance has for one day foisted them.

A very few minutes after eleven o'clock, the hour

appointed, the King, with royal punctuality, makes his appearance, and is received with a salvo of applause which lasts several minutes, and gives time to himself and the persons of his suite to settle in their appointed places. The King wears his usual general's uniform; he sits in the throne under a handsome scarlet canopy, his two sons, Humbert and Amadeus, standing on his right and left, without availing themselves of the stools which are placed beside His Majesty's chair for their accommodation. The Ministers range themselves round the throne, close to its steps. The King's suite throng in at the door in the rear. All who come in with the King wear military or civilian uniforms with such orders as they are entitled to display.

The King bears himself on public occasions with great dignity and solemnity. He is gifted with a strong manly voice, and his delivery is firm and distinct, so that not one word he utters is lost. Few orators equal him in the art of laying peculiar emphasis in the proper places, and allowing pauses for any emotion to which the salient points in his speech may give rise. None of those who heard him will ever forget the impression he made in 1859, when he engaged that Piedmont "would not be deaf to the cry of distress of her Italian sisters," or in 1871, when he declared that "Italy was in Rome and would abide there."

A pity it is that the days in the Italian Parlia-

ment should follow, yet so little resemble each other. For a royal sitting there is invariably an immense crowd—for earnest every-day's work there is almost utter solitude. Precious time passes, and the Deputies in whom the sovereignty of the Italian nation is vested accomplish no more than the French monarch, Louis XV., when the weather interfered with his field sports, and it used to be officially announced "*Le Roi aujourd'hui ne fera rien.*" It is astonishing to see how ingeniously both the constitution and the Rules of the House have been contrived to be in the way of any possible business. The ceremony of opening-day, the "verification of powers," or inquiry into new elections, and the appointment of a new *Seggio*, or board, the President and other officials, occupied in former times and still occupy an unconscionable number of days in tedious formalities, which even the ablest and most assiduous members make it a point to eschew if they can at all flatter themselves that they may be spared, reserving themselves to hasten to their places by the time earnest work begins. Why work should not begin at once, why the Houses should not meet on the very day of the opening, and an hour or two after the delivery of the speech from the throne; why, as there is no debate on the address in this country, the Ministers should not at once lay their Bills upon the table, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer bring in his financial statement—a matter at all times of vital

importance in Italy—are all questions to be met with a single answer, "The Chamber is not constituted." The Chamber is not in being.

I was present at the sitting the other day when the House went to work to comply with this preliminary part of its duties. What there was to be done this year was not much. The new elections were not numerous, and all the Lower Chamber had to do was only to elect its presidential board—a task rendered extremely easy by the agreement existing among an immense majority of the Deputies that the functionaries whose office expired with the last session should be invited to resume their places for the present. Such a resolution however could not be carried by acclamation. Even the mere formality of a re-election must result from a legal act of the Chamber, requiring the presence of at least "one-half *plus* one" of the existing members, and the suffrage of at least "one-half *plus* one" of the members present. By a recent regulation the chair of the Chamber during this period of gestation is filled by one of the Vice-presidents of the last session, and in that quality the Deputy Pisanelli sat in his place at an early hour awaiting his colleagues, the most diligent of whom dropped in one by one at intervals of five and ten minutes. Somewhat less than threescore had made their appearance when the temporary President rang his bell and proclaimed that "the sitting was opened." Then he waited for another hour, at the end of which his

bell was again heard, and "as some newly-elected Deputies had caught his eye," he thought "he might as well swear them in." In ordinary cases the oath is simultaneously administered to the whole batch. They all stand up, have the form of the oath read to them, and holding up their right hand they say in a chorus, "*Lo giuro!*" Pisanelli's object in this case was however to "gain," *i. e.*, to kill time, so he called up his men one by one, and the oath was droned out again and again till its monotonous sound elicited from the few wearied spectators muttered appeals to Heaven of a less solemn but of a far more forcible description. The swearing being over, there ensued another and a longer pause, during which Pisanelli took up one pen after another, critically peering into the nib of each of them. The bell then gave another peal, and the President this time at last declared that the business of the day was to begin in good earnest. The election of the new Speaker was to be made by "*appello nominale*," by a call of the members' names in alphabetical order, to be answered by the word "Presente," after which the summoned one, if present, should rise from his seat and walk up to the urn erected on the President's table and there lay a folded paper containing the name of his candidate for the speakership. The duty of calling the names devolved on the Secretary Massari, from time immemorial the Stentor of the House, who manages to employ more than one hour in going through the list of 506 members by dwelling

on each syllable of the names with distinct emphasis, and waiting for the response which is a long time in coming, and in most cases does not come at all. When the alphabet has been gone over from A to Z, people look into each other's faces for several minutes, when the President again calls out, "Let the counter-call be made" (*Si farà il contr' appello*). A second call is made, and there is no occasion to count the papers in the urn. Hardly 150 members have entered the Hall in three hours. Pisanelli heaves a deep sigh; he takes up his hat, and says mournfully "*Non siamo in numero*" (We are not a *quorum*). To-day's order of the day will stand over for to-morrow's, and the Chamber is dismissed.

All this is distressing, and all the more so as it would not be easy to determine on whom the blame of this sorry exhibition of parliamentary impotence should be particularly laid. No Italian, it seems, likes Rome as a residence, and there is hardly any Deputy or Senator, however zealous and diligent, who does not endeavour to curtail his attendance in Parliament as much as he conscientiously can. Owing to a variety of causes which it would be easy to enumerate, the business which could be condensed into a three months' session is made to drag its weary length over six and even seven months. Between a capital which has no attraction and a home endeared by its ordinary associations and occupations, it is easy to see on which side the longings of an unpaid legislator will be swayed.

Italian Senators and Deputies receive no remuneration; most of them are too poor to afford lodging for their families at Roman prices, and some at least have hearts tender enough to pine for absent wives and children; others are professors of universities, magistrates and other public functionaries, and they have to choose between the observance of duties for which they are paid and of duties for which they are not paid. Add to this that Members of Parliament, although unpaid, enjoy the privileges of a free ticket over every railway line in the country; the only thing that costs them nothing is the going backwards and forwards from the capital to the province and from the province to the capital; and as the journey down is pleasanter to them than the journey up, nothing is easier than to dismiss and disperse them, nothing more difficult than to bring back and re-assemble them. Thus at the early stage of parliamentary operations honourable members absent themselves from the Chamber because it is not constituted, and the Chamber cannot constitute itself because honourable members absent themselves. Even when all these difficulties are overcome, and Parliament is at last in full working gear, there come the Christmas, Carnival, Easter and other holidays, when the members scatter about several days before the recess only to meet again several days after it, because "they are sure there will not be a *quorum*, and nothing can be done without it."

It might be asked, "Is there any reason why all this should not be changed?" The Italians, new to constitutional life, have a most laudable but somewhat superstitious reverence for the *statuto*, or charter, which Charles Albert bestowed upon Piedmont in 1848, and which, together with the tricolor, is looked upon as the corner-stone on which the national edifice rests. The conservatism of the Italians is in some respects bigoted and pedantic. But with respect to parliamentary proceedings it must be observed that only the *quorum*, or the rule by which no deliberation of the Chamber is valid unless it is carried by an absolute majority (one-half of the members and one), is laid down in the statute. It is not quite certain that that obnoxious article might not be attacked in front with as much ease and with far greater dignity than the Chambers now contrive to walk round it. But as to the Electoral Law, and the *Regolamento*, or Rules of the House, they are all matters left for the legislators' discretion, and very beneficial as well as perfectly harmless reforms could be legally introduced.

The Italian Parliament, as a whole, is not much better and not much worse than any Assembly of the same nature in other countries. The hive is large, and it has its drones as well as its bees. There are Deputies in the kingdom who in the three years of the present Legislature, have only made their appearance once, and that only to fetch their gold badge and their season-ticket for the

railways. There is nothing to prevent the Chamber from expelling men who thus disgrace it—there is nothing to prevent it from considering whether its number of 506 might not be advantageously reduced by one-third or one-half, by raising the constituencies from 50,000 to 75,000 or 100,000 souls, insuring thus a smaller but more quiet and select set of legislators, excluding the mere mob of lawyers and professors whose private avocations clash with their public duties; doing away with much of that inordinate verbiage and of that tumultuous clamour which make the deliberations of a too large Assembly always wearisome and often scandalous.

Two hundred and fifty Deputies, a three months' session, the abolition of all needless formalities concerning the constitution of the Chamber, the prohibition of written speeches, and a little cold water thrown on exuberant eloquence, the salutary English practice of "coughing down bores," a well-digested arrangement of parliamentary labours, and a well-filled order of the day,—above all, the suppression of free railway tickets and of idle holidays,—would give Italy as efficient and respectable a Parliament as might meet all exigencies of the country.

Not a little of the hindrance that the work of legislation meets in Italy depends less on the Deputies than upon the electoral body from whom they spring. The Electoral Law in Italy is theoretically a very sensible one; it restricts the suffrage

to citizens who pay direct taxes to the amount of not less than 40 f. yearly, making exception in favour of men exercising what is called a "liberal profession," who are looked upon as entitled to the franchise by virtue of their superior education. Practically however the law cannot be said to work satisfactorily, because the electors, small as is their number and respectable as is their rank, are not yet penetrated with the importance of their functions; and it is often with the greatest difficulty, even in the largest cities and in the most advanced communities, that one-third of the electors can be mustered at the polls. Although bribery is unknown—and perhaps precisely because bribery is unknown—Italian elections are influenced by sheer party agitation, and tend to the promotion of political mountebanks and adventurers, whose only recommendation is often mere glibness of tongue and the profession of exaggerated democratic opinions. In no Parliament in Europe are perhaps advocates and other professional men so numerous as in the Chamber at Monte Citorio, and in no other Chamber are property, industry and trade so imperfectly represented. If the finances of the kingdom are always out of order, if the discussion of the budget is carelessly hurried through and extravagant expenditure countenanced, it is mainly because the taxes are in a great measure voted by men on whom the public burdens sit lightly, because the purse-strings of the State are in the hands

of stewards for whom national bankruptcy would have nothing personally or domestically appalling. The same recklessness in the public expenditure and the same readiness to add to the tax-payers' burdens is equally observable in provincial and municipal councils. Everywhere the tax-payers' interests are disregarded and sacrificed—an evil inseparable from equality of electoral rights in other countries, but in Italy, where the suffrage is limited, simply to be ascribed to apathy and ignorance, to incapacity on the part of the electors of feeling their own strength, and putting it forth in self-defence.

Municipal elections in Italy have a peculiar political importance, arising both from the permanent and from the temporary conditions of the country. Although for more than half a century all Italian aspirations have been towards national unity, now that the struggle has been successfully terminated and the great object attained, the innate tendencies of the people towards local self-government are strongly and, on the whole, beneficially developing themselves. The Italians, one may be sure, will never fall into the delusions of the French Communists or of the Spanish Cantonalists; but neither will they submit to that blind system of centralization which has so long been the bane of revolutionized France. The institutions of the latter country, which were at the outset rather too servilely taken as models for the re-organization of

the emancipated Subalpine Peninsula, are inevitably, though imperceptibly, undergoing vital modifications in their application, suggested and in a great measure imposed by the circumstances of the country and the character of the inhabitants. In Italy, as in France, there are Prefects and Syndics; Governors of provinces and Mayors of cities. Italian provinces to some extent correspond in size and importance to the French Departments; but in Italy the city is of far greater weight than the province. The Syndic is a functionary exercising a more decisive social influence than the Prefect. France has one capital, and her other towns are mainly manufacturing or commercial communities. Italy has a seat of Government in Rome, but her great cities, Turin, Milan, Genoa and Venice, Bologna and Florence, Naples and Palermo, are so many capitals; Piedmont and Lombardy, Tuscany, &c., acknowledge the lead of the cities which have so long been their political centres. The Italians have been and are willing to sacrifice as much of their individual existence as they deem necessary for their national security; but they think their common well-being will best be promoted by giving local interests their utmost development. The Prefect, a very poorly-paid representative of the Central Government, is little more than the head of the provincial police. In his administrative capacity he is swayed by his Provincial Council; in the city where he resides, especially if it be a large

city, he is overruled by the Syndic and the Municipal Council. A Syndic in a large city is almost invariably a great nobleman or a distinguished statesman, often both; hitherto there has been no serious collision between the general and the local authorities, and none perhaps need ever be apprehended. The Prefect as a rule knows his place, and is aware that his chief merit in the eyes of the Central Government lies in his ability to live at peace with the local authorities. The basis of representative government is being strongly laid in Italy. The people begin to understand that the sovereignty lies with them; and although they are often remiss in exercising their rights, they do not lightly allow them to be violated by those whom they know they pay as public, *i. e.* as their own servants.

Apart from the finance, the police, and the administration of justice, it cannot be said that free institutions in Italy have led to unsatisfactory results. The Italian Deputies, though they waste an immense deal of time, are not liable to the charge of setting their countrymen the example of idleness. They sit day after day for six days in the week and for six months in the year, not allowing themselves any relaxation throughout the Carnival, and not even on the auspicious occasion of the King's *fête*. The attendance is seldom numerous, but once fairly started the business of the House proceeds with little or no interruption, and for a final

division, or for the discussion of topics of general interest, a sufficient number of members can at any time, as a rule, be assembled.

And it is not merely for their zeal and assiduity in the discharge of their duty that credit is, or would under better management be due to the Deputies and Senators of the Italian kingdom. Their disinterestedness, moderation and forbearance, their tact and discretion, the instinct which tells them when to be wisely reticent and when to be fearlessly outspoken, entitle them to high distinction among all European deliberative bodies of modern times, and give evidence of the singular political sense and aptitude of the whole people. All the insidious arguments drawn from the general practice of other Continental Parliamentary Assemblies in support of a proposal that a stipend, or at least an indemnity for daily expenses, should be allowed to members of either House, have foundered, not only against the people's reverence for the Constitution which forbids it, but also against the determined repugnance of the legislators to the idea of adding to the charge of an already overburdened Treasury for their own benefit, and taking wages for the exercise of that national sovereignty, which reduced the King himself to the condition of its first servant. The same wisdom again and again set their hearts against motions for a revision of the Electoral Law, with a view to the introduction of universal suffrage. The results of similar

experiments in France and Spain would have acted as sufficient warnings to the Italians, even had the question not been settled in this country on many previous occasions throughout the period of Piedmontese and Italian legislation. The cry of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" never found an echo even among the most advanced Italian liberals; and notwithstanding all the popularity of Benedetto Cairoli, the Garibaldian hero sprung from a heroic family, he so thoroughly failed in his late motion to bring in his Manhood Suffrage Bill, that the attempt is not likely to be renewed either by him or others.

Equal coolness of head, equal prudence and temperance, were recently shown by the Chamber when dealing with the Bismarck-La Marmora controversy, and with the frequent incidents arising from the incessant conflict between the civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as well as from the restless, however reasonable, aspirations of Evangelical and other free Christian communities. The Italian legislators evince the utmost dislike and dread of all unnecessary disturbance and scandal. Even the most uncompromising Opposition members are amenable to an opportune warning or a friendly request from the Government; and mere party animosities invariably give way before high political considerations. Thus the discussion of the Civil Marriage Bill was indefinitely put off, not because it was not a sensible one, or because it had any very strenuous

adversaries to contend with, but for dynastic considerations, which were more easily understood than explained. In the same manner, a member of the Extreme Left, Felice Cavallotti, accepted with a good grace the evasive answer given by the Minister of Justice to his question respecting a tumult of which the Corso had been the theatre, and the alleged arbitrary arrest of some of the persons implicated in it. These are subjects on which the Parliamentary Tribune and the press are equally loath to be explicit. Rome, although once "the land of the world" and now the capital of a large kingdom, is still a sufficiently small town to ferret out a secret and to keep it, and many things which every one knows and no one approves, are simply connived at and ignored for the sake of a quiet life.

And whatever may be thought of the heat of temperament and of the suddenness of Southern passions, it may be observed that although clamorous and all but riotous scenes are matters of very frequent occurrence in the Italian Parliament, and especially in the Lower Chamber, there have been no instances of actual violence; and it is only on record, as a flagrant exceptional case, that two honourable members once walked up to one another across the floor of the House with uplifted fists. In the moment of the wildest tumult some *Deus ex machinâ*, a Cavour while he lived, or after his death a Ricasoli, when he is present, has hitherto always

stepped forward, and been sufficient to allay the wildest storms. The noise in the Chamber is loud and almost incessant, but the disorder is generally harmless and transitory.

There is good reason to hope that the Italian House of Deputies will, when necessary, show greater severity towards some of its delinquent members. There have been stories connected with Italian parliamentary annals—such as that of the disgusting Lobbia affair—a recurrence of which must be carefully guarded against; and we have proofs that the Chamber shows its disposition to deal firmly with all matters which affect the honour of its members. It carefully avoids all conflicts with the judicial authorities, and is ever ready to waive the privilege which screens the Deputies from the action of the law. Leave to attend a Court in Florence was given to Corrado and Ruspoli, who were charged with lending to a journalist the free railway tickets which are allowed to Members of Parliament for personal use; and the law was suffered to take its course in the case of the above-mentioned Felice Cavallotti, who had to answer for a libel to which, as a newspaper writer, he had put his name previously to his election.

It is only to be regretted that the Chamber did not evince equal firmness in chastising the boldness of this same member—an irrepressible democrat—when he was admitted to take his oath on his first appearance in the House. The form of oath in the

Italian Parliament can hardly be said to be of a religious character. The name of God does not occur in it; it can equally be administered to Jew or Gentile, and simply binds the member to "be faithful to the King, loyally to observe the statutes and laws of the State, and to fulfil his functions as a deputy with the single aim of promoting the inseparable welfare of the King and country." It is an oath implying monarchico-constitutional convictions, and as such it was objected to by Mazzini, who therefore never entered the Chamber, though such out-and-out Mazzinians as Aurelio Satti, Niccola Fabrizi and others never shared their leader's scruples, and were duly and repeatedly sworn in. Cavallotti, however, as "a Republican and something more," as well as an open professor of irreligion, deemed himself entitled to treat the Rules of the House with contempt, and declared in a letter addressed to the editor of the *Capitale* that he "looked upon the oath as an empty form, a mere *farce* out of date, binding him to nothing, and implying no dereliction of his Republican ideas." His letter was extensively read, and his entrance into the House was looked forward to with curiosity. The President offered to swear in the new member, when the Deputy Lioy rose, and alluding to Cavallotti's declarations which had appeared with his signature in a public print, he asked whether the honourable gentleman abided by those declarations, and

thought that he could take his seat in that House compatibly with his views and notions, and bound by an oath which was in his opinion of no value, and which he described as "a comedy."

Cavallotti attempted to answer, but was prevented by the President, who referred to the Rules of the House, and intimated that till the honourable gentleman had taken the oath he was no member, and could not be heard. The President further observed in answer to Lioy, that it could not be supposed that any Deputy would appear in the House unless it was his firm purpose to abide by his oath, which was hardly as much a religious form as a solemn promise given on honour involving a moral obligation of a most sacred character. He then proceeded to administer the oath, and when the form had been read by him, the new member cried out "*Giuro—e domando la parola*" (I swear—and ask leave to speak). Leave was of course granted, and he added, "I declare that I abide by the declarations which I published yesterday," *i.e.*, that he held the oath to be a mere farce.

I quote at full length the particulars of this striking instance of sheer blackguardism occurring in the Italian Chamber, because at the same time that it shows the utmost distortion of all ideas of right and wrong in an individual member, it also proves the marvellous patience and self-control of the whole Assembly. In any other Parliament the

Chamber would have taken Cavallotti's conduct as an insult, and it would have required no stretch of the Rules of the House to have had him expelled for contempt of the House. But the Italians have an invincible horror of anything that can lead to a scandal. Their instinct is to hush up whatever is unpleasant, and Cavallotti was allowed to take his seat to the end of the Legislature, merely putting up with a rebuke of the President, who denounced his conduct in a tone of towering indignation, and uttered a protest which there can be no doubt, in spite of all party passion or prejudice, found an echo in the heart of every honest man present.

This matter of the oath, both in political and judicial proceedings, is becoming a subject for serious consideration in this country, where long hostility to the clergy and revolt against some of the tenets and practices of the Church are rapidly undermining all sense of religion, and with it every basis of sound morality; a deplorable however natural reaction against the crushing tyranny for so many years exercised over men's consciences by the priests in their zeal for the enforcement of their temporal authority. There is nothing more frequent in an Italian court of law, especially in political cases, and where men above the lowest ranks appear as witnesses, than to hear objections raised to the oath, on the ground either of dissent from the established religion or even of utter dis-

belief and sheer atheism. The judge in many instances resorts to reasons and remonstrances, and endeavours to coax or bully recusant witnesses into compliance with what he represents as a "mere form," hinting that the observance of a man's engagements of a religious character must lie between him and his Maker, but that for any prevarication or deceit in his deposition a witness is amenable to human as well as to Divine law; or, in other words, that there may be punishment in this as well as in another world for false witnesses, whether under oath or not. But vain are all exhortations, and I have seen sometimes judges admitting the recusant witness's evidence without the oath, sometimes ordering him to be removed from court unheard, apparently because there is no prescribed rule of proceeding on the subject, or because the rule has been suffered to fall into disuetude, and a necessity for a reform in judicial institutions is implicitly admitted. In the opinion of many persons the practice of swearing witnesses in a court of law in this godless country is doing more harm than good, and the cause of public morality would rather gain than lose by its discontinuance. And far less defensible appears to these persons the political oath. They do not see why a Member of Parliament or a public functionary should be bound to the King and Constitution by any stronger ties than the allegiance which, independently of any declaration, every subject owes to the Sovereign

and the State; and the revolutions of almost daily occurrence in France and Spain prove how lightly the most solemn obligations of a political nature lie on the consciences of men of the Latin race and members of the Church of Rome. There certainly must be Deputies in the Versailles Assembly and in the Madrid Cortes who would feel greater respect for themselves had they never taken an oath in their lives.

CHAPTER XX.

ITALIAN ROYALTY.

Victor Emmanuel—His Court—His Domestic Arrangements—His Character—The King at Home and Abroad—The King in Germany—The Italian King and the German Emperor—The King in England—The Civil List—The King's Liberality—His Extravagance—Stars and Crosses—The Fountain of Honour.

When the present generation and the next have passed away, there will perhaps be a King of Italy resident in Rome. But that must be a sovereign of a different stamp from Victor Emmanuel II.—a man of other tastes and habits than his. Four years will soon have elapsed since the King's troops achieved the easy conquest of his new capital, and the time he has honoured it with his presence, taken altogether, scarcely amounts to as many months. Rome is to many strangers a somewhat objectionable summer residence; but the King seems to find it an equally irksome sojourn in winter. He appears for one day to open Parliament; on the morrow he leaves for a fortnight at Naples; he will be back by and by for another day, but go on to Florence for a month. It is true

he has many duties; other places besides Rome have claims upon him. But the Romans complain that they have less of him than their due.

Victor Emmanuel is nowhere at home in a town, but least of all in the Pope's city. It is always in spite of himself that Victor Emmanuel plays a monarch's part, though, to do him justice, he can play it with sufficient dignity and grace. His instincts are those of a soldier and sportsman; it is only under a tent or in a gamekeeper's lodge that he seems to breathe freely. His Piedmontese subjects became acquainted with his predilections at an early period; they knew that it was only some great public solemnity that could bring him up from his woodcocks at Pollenzo or his chamois at Valdieri; and that even for such occurrences the horses which brought him in the morning would take him away in the evening. But these unsocial tastes grew upon him as he advanced in years and as his kingdom extended; he found in the Pitti Palace less comfort than in his bachelor's quarters on the Turin upper floor, and the Quirinal is now for him the most tedious of human abodes. In vain has he built for himself a new pavilion in the rear of the Palace, and added vast mews, with stabling, as we are told, "for five hundred horses." In vain have the Paradises of the Ludovisi and other suburban villas, and the broad domain of Castel Porziano been hired or bought for him, with a view to acclimate him to Rome and supply him with

free air and rural sports. The King can find no ease away from Piedmont. It is too late for him to accustom himself to new faces and to drop his familiar idioms. He shuns acquaintance where intimacy is out of the question; it takes all the King's graciousness to overcome the man's shyness.

There is no better patriot in Italy than Victor Emmanuel, but his turn of mind, his general disposition — above all things his acquirements, such as they are, have nothing in common with these southern districts of Italy with which he only became acquainted late in life. The King is no artist, no archæologist, no judge of pictures, no reader of books. He can hardly sympathize with that Florentine fastidiousness which leaves a cathedral unfinished for six centuries because the original design of the façade has been mislaid, and all the genius of after-ages cannot make up for the loss. He can hardly understand that Roman veneration which suffers a shapeless mound of earth to stand in the way of railway progress, and opposes the removal of rubbish recommended in some instances neither by beauty, nor by authentic and intelligible historic interest.

Perhaps also independently of religious scruples and of his personal regard for the dethroned Pontiff, there is something in the King's new position that disquiets him more than he would be willing to avow. Little as he likes State and Court pageantry, he is in his heart of hearts every inch a king, and

has dim but lofty ideas of the royal prerogative. He has frankly and honestly accepted Constitutionalism, but some consciousness of the "Divine Right" still lurks in his bosom, and he is not quite free from compunction at the facility with which other sovereigns' rights were set aside for his benefit. With all the plainness of his daily life he is by no means destitute of ambition both for himself and his dynasty, and it was owing to his infatuation and obstinacy alone that the Duke of Aosta won and lost the crown of Spain, and the Duke of Genoa had a narrow escape of the same distinction. But it was only in compliance with the wishes of the Italian nation that Victor Emmanuel marched as a conqueror to Florence and Naples, dispossessing some of his nearest relatives, and came to crown the edifice in Rome, breaking the sceptre of the Vicar of Christ. He well knew that revolution is a desperate game for kings to play at, and there was no lack of "friends" to give him a *hodie-mihi-cras-tibi* warning.

Can any man wonder if the thought of the strangeness of his position preys on the King's mind? Yet the King's absence from his capital both through the summer and winter months is a great political and social evil—an evil which nothing in the arrangement either of the Court or of the city of Rome is calculated to correct. The Princess Marguerite does, as I have said, the honours of the Quirinal with becoming diligence and infinite grace,

but her drawing-room is still in a great measure shunned by the sulky Roman aristocracy of the highest rank; it has little attraction for Italian public men, who feel themselves elbowed and hustled by foreign tourists, many of whom have hardly any business there. And the popularity of the Princess is purely personal; there is, properly speaking, no Court to back her, for the domestic arrangements of the King have disorganized and to a great extent demoralized the Royal household, and rendered his daughter-in-law's position extremely difficult both in the King's absence and in his presence. The Ministers are as a rule poor men, most of them unmarried, or with wives who do not show. Neither their salaries nor their official residences are of a nature to encourage extravagance; and Donna Laura, Minghetti's wife, a lady of tact and spirit, is I believe the first statesman's wife who has opened a *salon* for Government or party purposes, and encouraged social intercourse on any scale. The necessity for a rallying-point, for a bond of union, is sorely felt, and it is evident that it ought to be for the Head of the State to supply it. But the intensely proud and shy, though apparently easy, cordial and affable nature of the King, his eccentric habits, and his still more singular tastes in the choice of unofficial confidants and attendants, have estranged from him not a few of his old self-respecting Piedmontese nobles, at the same time that they have indisposed many of

the wealthy aristocracy of Lombardy, of Tuscany and other provinces—and now that of Rome—to accept the King's advances.

But it is never a good policy for a King to accustom his subjects to dispense with the Sovereign's presence. The Italians are aware that nations must put up with monarchs as they are, and they feel that in his public capacity Victor Emmanuel is without contradiction the best ruler that Providence ever vouchsafed to any country. His name is and will for ever be endeared to his people, who identify him with the rise and development of their hard-won nationality, and who know that neither the valour of their soldiers nor the genius of their statesmen has so powerfully befriended their cause as have the thorough sterling honesty, the strong good sense and the steady purpose of their sovereign, as well as his determination to fulfil his engagements and to give in to the wishes of his people, whatever sacrifice his policy might impose either on his personal feelings or on his dynastic interests. There never was an instance in which Victor Emmanuel, if plied with just argument and swayed by faithful counsel, did not rise above personal considerations—no instance in which he allowed his inclination, his pursuit of pleasure, or even what they taught him as religion, to get the better of his sense of duty. At Turin in 1855, when his mother, brother, wife and infant child were cut off by death within a period of two months, and at

San Rossore, in 1866, when himself almost at his last gasp, Victor Emmanuel was a far greater hero than at Palestro and Solferino; for in battle he had only to deal with men; but in his closet and on his death-bed he had to defy the devil, in whom he unfeignedly believed.

An Irish member of the House of Commons, now deceased, carried away by excessive zeal for the Pope's cause, described Victor Emmanuel as a prince combining "the manners of a moss-trooper with the morals of a he-goat." Doubtless there is something in the King's private life which will not bear close inspection. He is a man of gross and violent instincts, of unrefined taste, accustomed to a self-indulgence in which he was encouraged by the priestly instructors appointed by his father as the rigid Mentors of his youth. The King's countenance conveys only too faithful an indication of all the evil that is in him, but that saying is a cruel libel on his loyal, frank and generous character. To look at him Victor Emmanuel seems hardly fit to reign over what is generally acknowledged to be one of the finest races of men. Yet one hears women in the crowd at Florence and Rome, and more frequently at Naples, cry out "*Che bell' omo!*" But the Piedmontese, more accustomed to the sight, are satisfied with saying, "There goes our brave King."

I have seen Victor Emmanuel a hundred times in Italy on State occasions; I saw him in London at the

time of his visit after the Crimean war; and I have followed him stage by stage on his late journey through Austria and Germany. Never perhaps did he appear to greater disadvantage than by contrast with the slim but remarkably *distingué* figure of the Kaiser at Vienna, or with the aged but stately frame of the German Emperor at Berlin. An expression of amiability in private intercourse and a certain bluff dignity on gala ceremonies are not wanting in the Italian King; but the part does not seem played naturally. There is a heaviness, an awkwardness in his bearing, in the way in which he rolls his strong, overgrown bulk, swinging his arms most unroyally, and straining his neck so as to thrust his head further back than nature laid it in his shoulders—there is an abruptness in his voice, a swagger in his gesture, which completely disappear when majesty is laid aside, and which prove with how great an effort it is assumed. Under such circumstances no wonder if its assumption is distasteful; if the King hates State ceremonies and public meetings, and looks upon the necessity of showing himself now and then as the heaviest penalty attached to his kingly rank and office; though, strange to say, he is a very rigid stickler for Court etiquette, and insists on the strictest observance of the old-fashioned ceremonial which at all times distinguished the House of Savoy, exacting it both on the part of all the princes of his family and of the members of his household.

All this restraint however does not reach very far beyond the ante-chamber. The King indemnifies himself for the *gêne* imposed upon him abroad by his more than ungartered ease at home. He shocked every man in Berlin at the time of his visit by the indecent haste with which he took French leave twelve hours before the time appointed, breaking through his engagement to breakfast or lunch with the Emperor William, solely because he conceived that his mission was accomplished, and he longed for the end of that *corvée* of State dinners, gala nights, concerts, reviews and court ceremonies. "As soon as he found himself half a kilomètre from the station," he declared, "he would take off his coat and travel in his shirt-sleeves all the way to Vienna, and by the route he had come; he would travel day and night without half-an-hour's stoppage, and would telegraph to every station along the line that 'the King was sleeping and would dispense with all demonstrations and acclamations, and with the addresses of Prefects, Syndics, and other *bores* of that description.'"

The good Germans were surprised and almost scandalized to see a King sit down to a sumptuous imperial board and "dine without eating."

"Ungeheuer!" they exclaimed; "not even an ice, nor a *meringue*, nor a glass of champagne, nor a drop of Chartreuse, has passed the King's lips!" His cook follows Victor Emmanuel wherever he goes, and satisfies his heroic appetite with *risotto*,

polenta and those strong stewed meats, those messes of pottage for which the King, like many of his subjects, is ever ready to sell his birthright.

Yet King Victor Emmanuel left on the whole no bad impression of himself beyond the Alps. He won the heart of the old Emperor William by the frankness with which he declared at their first interview, "that although he had strongly blamed Napoleon III. for his unwarrantable attack on Prussia in 1870, his sympathies after Sedan were on the losing side, and, *had he been a free agent*, he would have marched with 200,000 men to the rescue of France." To the other persons who approached him the Italian King did not seem destitute of grace and address. They found that "he could converse with ease and place others at their ease; that he had as good a stock of general information as can be picked up without books; that he was by no means deficient in intelligence, and possessed all that shrewdness which enabled a half-educated man to venture upon many topics without getting out of his depth." They concluded that the King acts well his part when it suits him, though evidently very little of it goes a great way with him; that he is accustomed to curtail the performance and make short work of it at home, and he had hardly foreseen how wearisome and overpowering the same task indefinitely prolonged would be abroad.

It was otherwise in England, where people were amazed to see the King treat the carpets of the

Great Western state carriages with as little respect as a Kentuckian would show for the deck of a western river steamer; where he amused aides-de-camp and equerries by the adroitness with which he lighted his cigar-matches by rubbing them against the gold band of his trousers; where he shocked the Lord Chancellor by his *naïve* question "whether they had the *Code Napoléon* in England," and being answered in the negative, he gravely replied, "*Vous devriez l'avoir*"; and where it was reported that "his faithful Yorkshire groom being on his death-bed, the King offered him his doctor and his confessor, and upon the wife of the dying man objecting to the intrusion of the ghostly adviser, the King observed with real concern, '*Ah, j'oubliais que vous êtes juifs*'"—only Catholics in his estimation being Christians! In spite of all these slips however, it is surprising to see how far mother-wit will go in a highly-placed personage, even when, as in the case of Victor Emmanuel, he either never had any book-learning in his youth, or made it a point to forget it all upon reaching years of discretion. The amiable Court Librarian at Turin, Domenico Promis, now dead, told every one with chagrin how perfect a sinecure his office had become in the present reign, and he referred with honest pride to the good old times of the King's father, Charles Albert, who used to spend mornings and evenings closeted with him, Promis, in his sanctum, and turn over volume after volume of the art of war—

that art for which he thought he had an innate aptitude, and in which he failed deplorably as soon as he attempted to bring his long-meditated theory into practice.

There is a set of men in Italy who are disposed to quarrel with the allowance of 12,000,000 f., or 480,000*l.*, made by the Civil List to Victor Emmanuel. They call upon the King to consider the embarrassment of the Treasury and the distress of the people, and urge that if that sum cannot be lowered to the standard of the American President's salary, it ought at least to be considerably less than the income of the sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland, seeing that the revenue of the Italian kingdom hardly comes up to half that of the British Empire.

But it is unfair to blame King Victor Emmanuel for the waste of all the money which is nominally assigned as "endowment of the Crown." No man's revenue bears so many charges as that of the King of Italy, who is in reality the sovereign of many States, burdened with the palaces, parks, villas, museums and galleries which constituted the most precious jewels of several Royal and Ducal diadems. In every large town, and in many of the minor ones, the King is encumbered with property the expenses of which vastly outgrow its revenue, and which he can neither enjoy nor give up. What is the King to do with the Pitti Palace, or with Caserta, Capo di Monte and the Royal Palace at

Naples,—what with Monza, Turin, Milan, and Venice, —what with Moncalieri, Stupinigi, San Rossore, and other domains, some of which he never sees, but none of which can be suffered to go to ruin? It happens with royalty as with everything else in Italy—it is too grandly housed for its reduced fortunes. The experiment was made of turning some of the minor palaces, such as those of Parma, Modena, Lucca, Massa, &c., to useful purposes, making them over to the municipalities; but the gift has often been declined as onerous, and great has been the outcry against the vandalism which robbed those petty old capitals of the little lustre which survived their loss of independence, and deprived them of the means of welcoming the sovereign within their walls even for a passing visit. Independently of their merits as artistic monuments, many of those Italian palaces must be kept up for the celebration of those pageantries and festivities which are as necessary to the populace as the air they breathe, and in which the King and Princes are expected to play a conspicuous part, moving from place to place as the mere "properties" necessary for the *mise en scène* of all the shows.

But apart from these, which are permanent charges on the Civil List, and of the extraordinary expenses caused by such events as the visit of the Shah, and the presents he had to be loaded with, that unfortunate List is taxed almost to exhaustion by claims on the King's charity as well as on his

munificence as a patron of science, literature and art.

"President Grant," as was justly observed by *Fanfulla*, "is not expected to have a diamond pin, a golden snuff-box or a chronometer ready for all the poets who pester him with dedications of their verses. He is not bound to buy a picture or a statue at every exhibition in the capital or the provinces; he is not called upon to head a subscription in behalf of sufferers from the floods of the Potomac or the Rappahannock." And it may be added, he would never think of allowing a foreign lady a 2,000 f. indemnity for the loss she had sustained by thieves breaking into her apartment—thus taking upon himself the responsibility of a mishap attributable at the utmost to the negligence of his police.

The King of Italy, to do him no more than bare justice, is never deaf to any appeal to his liberality. He has lofty ideas of his kingly station, and like his ancestor, Charles Emmanuel, he thinks the greatest privilege of royalty is "to give and forgive" *(donare e perdonare)*. Access to him is never denied to the meanest of his subjects, no application for relief is disregarded; and to judge by what race of beggars his ante-chambers must be beset, we have only to remember that the Empress of Russia had already received 2,000 petitions for alms before she had been lodged for three days at her Embassy in the Italian capital.

When all has been said in the King's justification however it will still be difficult to acquit Victor Emmanuel of extravagance, or to contend that his tastes and habits are as simple and sober in everything as they are in some of the details of his domestic arrangements. There is no end to his outlay in horses, no limit to the luxury of his hunting and shooting establishments. Whether it be the King's fault or his misfortune, he has not the best attendants and private advisers about him. His prodigality is in a great measure the result of his inability to resist their importunity or to baffle their rapacity. A considerable amount of money goes to provide for Rosina (the Countess of Mirafiori, to whom the *Almanach de Gotha* represents the King as united by a "morganatic marriage," forgetting that such an arrangement would not be legal in Italy or in any Catholic country) as well as for her son who has been ennobled, and her daughter who has been twice married in a family of high rank.

There is no desire on the part of the public to pry into the King's private concerns. The Civil List is his, and there is a Minister to see that it is properly disposed of. But when the drain upon his purse caused by self-indulgence compels his Ministers to apply, as they had repeatedly to do, to Parliament to pay the King's debts, or to make considerable additions to his ordinary appointment, it is only too natural that murmurs should arise. Still if the

Italians will think of what value the traditions of the Savoy dynasty and the character of the present King have been to them in their struggle for national existence, if they look upon the condition of their brethren of France and Spain, at their wits' end in their attempt to give themselves a master, they will easily be brought to the conclusion that royalty is cheap for them at any price. Even in his private capacity Victor Emmanuel cannot be said to have abused his exalted station more than has been, or is, usually the case with persons born in the purple. It is well that people should look to those in high places for an example of greater continence and stricter morality than is expected of the average of common mortals; but the most that men can do is to "pray Heaven to send them good kings"; for it will in all cases be wisdom to "keep them as they are."

It is probably in consequence of his free hand in bestowing anything at his disposal, that King Victor Emmanuel, in his capacity of the Fountain of honour in the State, causes at certain seasons a perfect shower of stars and crosses to alight on his expectant subjects. The Italians are not so vain as their French neighbours, and ribands and rosettes are not as indispensable appendages to every man's button-hole on the east as on the west side of the Great Tunnel. Mix with the crowd of the Italian cities, and you will find it difficult to believe that you are in presence of a community numbering above

15,000 Knights of St. Maurice, and at least 12,000 of the Crown of Italy, without reckoning the officers, commanders, grand officers and grand cordons of those two orders, the Knights of the Annunziata, the knights and officers of the Civil and Military Merit of Savoy, to say nothing of dead or dying orders, such as six of the late kingdom of the Two Sicilies, two of Parma, three of Tuscany, and one of Modena, besides six in the gift of the Holy See, and one under control of the Grand Council of San Marino.

Much of the indifference of the Italians to these glittering trinkets is however mere affectation. The eagerness to bear "every man his own cross" is fully as strong among the subjects of King Victor Emmanuel as it is among the French. The order of St. Maurice (or *dei Santi Maurizio e Lazzaro*), dating from the middle of the fifteenth century, was originally a state-coach, "constructed to carry six," but it more lately became as roomy an omnibus as the French Légion d'Honneur. It was therefore deemed expedient to lighten its burden by starting a supplementary creation, that is, the *Corona d'Italia*, contrived to soothe the disappointment of the Italians for the loss of that *Corona di Ferro* which Napoleon I. had instituted for their benefit, and which Austria refused to surrender in 1866, when she had to give up Lombardy and with it the "Iron Crown" of the Lombards, from which the order took its name.

Italy has thus two knightly legions, instead of one.

There is no particular time in the year in which a man may not rise in the morning and find himself a knight. The officers of St. Maurice, great and small, are 2,660; but of the rank and file, the number is not known, as vacancies by death cannot in many instances be ascertained. The roll of nominations from 1860 to 1872 exceeds 20,000, and symptoms of even greater activity are given by the rival establishment of the "Crown of Italy," which only came into existence in 1868. The two orders put together receive an average yearly addition of 2,500 recruits.

No wonder where the lavishness is so great if the bounty is held somewhat cheap. The noble and witty Massimo d'Azeglio, during his short tenure of office, when solicited to bestow the insignia of the "notorious two Saints" on a "deserving candidate," used to say, "Aye, I will give him the Cross and the Calvary to boot, so I hear no more of him." And the King himself, when in a jocular humour, has been heard to observe that "there are two things he never refuses—a cigar and a cross of St. Maurice."

It would seem that gifts which are spoken of with contempt by the donor ought to be of little value to the receiver; but to think so would show a very imperfect knowledge of human nature. Petitions for Mauritian crosses come in by thou-

sands, not only from persons otherwise obscure, but also from men to whom the advantages of birth and rank would seem to leave nothing to desire; not merely from natives of the kingdom, but from subjects of other States; and from none so frequently or with more importunity than from the free and enlightened citizens of that American Republic which would not even put up with a Cincinnati Order, because to belong to the Union and to the Union alone should be held the highest of all earthly distinctions.

As if the crosses were not enough, there are also in Italy the Medals of St. Maurice (awarded to public functionaries of any degree and irrespective of any particular merit and simply in remuneration of *dieci lustri*, or fifty years' service), medals for military or naval valour, medals to civil valour, medals to the Thousand of Marsala, medals of Curtatone and Montanara, medals of the Wars of Independence, and finally medals for the public health, given to persons who have well deserved of their country by attending the sick or burying the dead in days of contagious or epidemic diseases.

Long before it began to flow at Rome the source of honour in Italy had become a very Fountain of Trevi or Acqua Paola in its copiousness. Knightly distinctions, originally grounded on aristocratic principles, have had to yield to democratic tendencies. Even the supreme Order of the Annunziata, the Garter of Savoy, dating from Amadeus VI.,

in the fourteenth century, had to be taken down a peg or two to receive such members as Cialdini and Rossi, Farini, Lanza and even Rattazzi—men who, whatever might be their deserts as soldiers or statesmen, could not show those sixteen quarters of nobility which alone qualified candidates for admission into that exalted fraternity.

The maxims that "Honour is the coin which costs least to the State" and that "where substantial food is scanty, stimulants may be administered with good effect," have been in short rather too freely acted upon in Italy. Cavour, himself high born and proud of his birth, was so wedded to a utilitarian policy that he meditated bringing in a Bill for the open sale both of chivalrous orders and of feudal titles, fixing a progressive tariff from 20,000 francs (800*l.*) upwards, to be consecrated to charitable purposes, hoping thus to make human vanity subservient to the interests of a finance which even in his days exhibited symptoms of almost irreparable disorder. But Cavour's scheme died with him, and a reaction against rampant democracy set in with such strength that his successors bethought themselves of a measure (equally futile) to inquire into the authenticity of titles of nobility, armorial bearings and all patrician distinctions. The necessity of "drawing the line somewhere," and saving, or indeed rescuing from vulgarity and actual disgrace such honours as the State has still in its power to dispense,

is extensively felt, and the conviction gains ground that royalty can with difficulty be kept up where it is stripped of those trappings which commend it to men's reverence. But *where* the line should be drawn is the question; for if the demand is great the supply is inexhaustible, and it is difficult to see, between the Ministers who propose their candidates and the King who chooses his own *motu proprio*, who has done the most towards diluting the social *elixir vitæ*, till it has very nearly lost all its spirit and flavour. Sella, for instance, has been known to send in the names of as many as 300 candidates for the honour of knighthood at one time.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY E. J. FRANCIS AND CO.,
TOOK'S COURT AND WINE OFFICE COURT, E.C.

00085270

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018